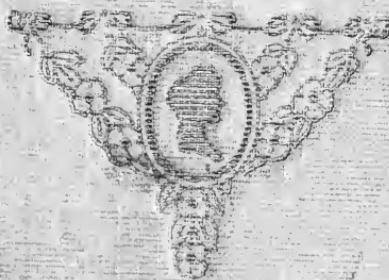


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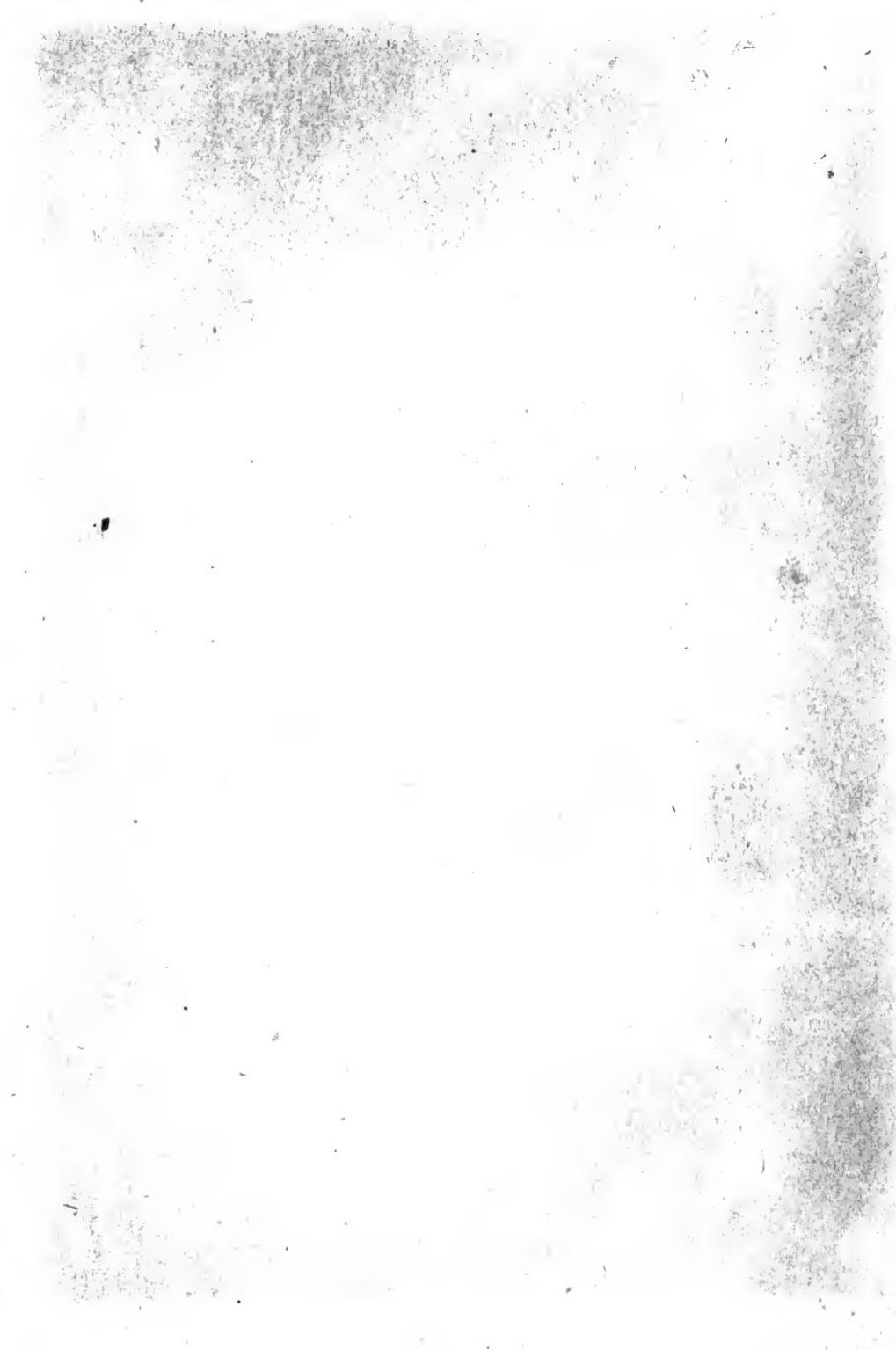
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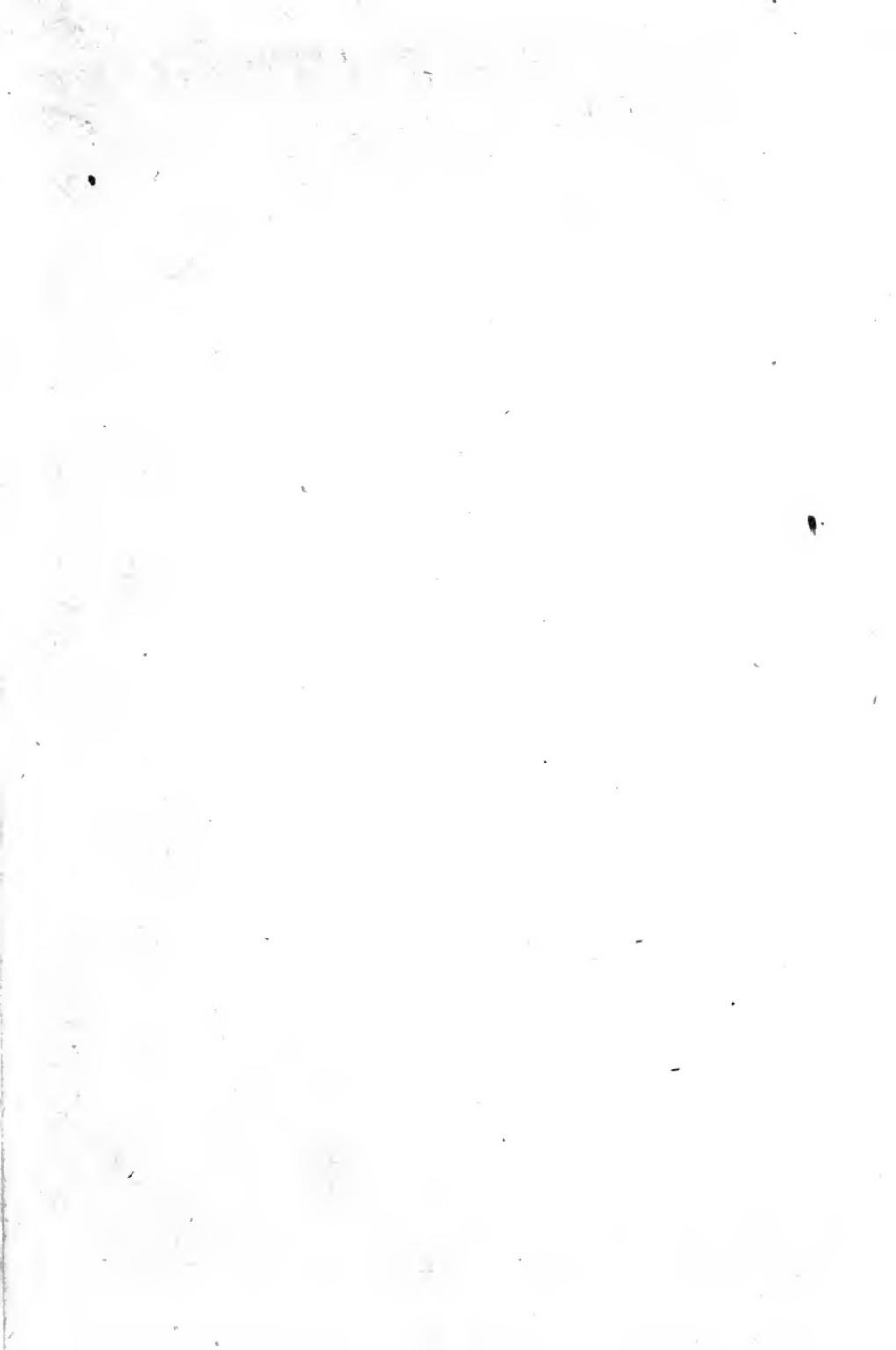




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Yours truly,

H. DODGE

Attraction
of the Compass
— OR —
**THE BLONDE
ESKIMO**

A ROMANCE OF THE NORTH
BASED UPON FACTS OF A
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

BY
H. Dodge

SECOND EDITION

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1916

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To all who are interested in this narrative
of my trip to the lost "Garden of Eden"—the
birthplace of man—I respectfully dedicate
this book.

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Attraction of the Compass
OR
The Blonde Eskimo

CHAPTER I

ON THE TRAIL ABOVE SKAGWAY

"Hey there, move on! move on! What's the trouble ahead there? Do we have to stay here all night?" This remark could be heard passing along the line of people who were struggling their way toward the summit, on the trail above Skagway.

Dogteams and horses, but for the most part people pulling their own sleds, could be seen in a solid line for two and a half miles, reminding one of a parade—or perhaps of a funeral, for there was many a groan, sigh and heartache on the Skagway trail in the year 1897.

Every now and then a delay occurred, as a sled upset or left the trail, or a horse died from exertion—or someone was taken ill and had to turn back. Possibly a horse fell over the cliff,

taking the sled with him. "Dead Horse Canyon" received its name from the fact that so many horses died on the trail at this point. All of these things caused blockades and delays.

Wet with sweat from pushing the load and driving my little dog-team up the steep trail, I sat there on my sled waiting for the crowd to move on, for there was no way of passing the other sleds without wading into the deep snow and pulling my load, which would have been next to impossible. A beautiful little Scandinavian girl was wedging her way past me, when suddenly her foot slipped, and she started over the cliff. Seizing the rope which lashed my load on the sled, I reached over with the other hand and pulled her back on the trail, thereby saving her from landing in a twenty-foot snow-drift lodged at the foot of the cliff, in which she would have suffocated had she reached it.

In a joking way I said to her, "Where are you going, my pretty maid? Are you traveling or going somewhere, or just coming back?" She replied, "I tank I go to Dawson. I not know, but I tank so."

"If you had gone over that cliff, I don't tank you would have gone any farther," I answered.

Just then we could hear the cry going up the line,

"Move on! move on! night is coming and we'll have to stay here without shelter"—and sure enough, a balky horse on ahead caused us to spend the night on the trail. I stretched a tarpaulin that I had between my sled and the one ahead of me, which formed a little tent; this was repeated by others on up the line. We were in for the night. It would not do to move on after dark, for at night a snow-covered canyon looks like a prairie, and you cannot keep the trail, and would not know what minute you might get into the deep snow, or fall over some cliff; for it all looks white and level.

The little Scandinavian girl did not seem to have any friends or anyone with her, so I invited her to share with me, and my two dogs, the little shelter which my tarpaulin afforded; but it was very little shelter, for through the White Pass Canyon the wind has no mercy for any living thing, and that night many a horse in the line perished. Over our heads we could hear the Russian raven screeching with cold as he sought to devour anything that might die on the trail. Hour after hour we sat there huddled together, for to lie down meant to perish from the cold. If anyone has ever gone through the White Pass Canyon above Skag-

way on foot, he will never forget the experience.

I kept up a constant conversation with the little girl nearly all night, to keep her from falling asleep; for I could hear the groans of dogs and men in the line and did not know what next might befall us.

During the night she told me a pitiful story of how she had started for Alaska from Chicago in search of her two brothers, who had gone there the year before with the first big gold rush. They had written her to come on and they would meet her in Skagway, the first point reached in Alaska, as you travel towards the Yukon Territory, *perhaps known to you, reader, as "Klondike."* After waiting there many weeks, during which time she used what little money she had, she decided to hit the trail, with the rest of the crowd, for Dawson. She had few supplies, but was blessed with a strong constitution, a sweet, winning smile, and a wonderful determination.

She explained to me that her brothers were good, honest men and were always anxious to do for her as brothers should, but when liquor was placed in their path their ways of honor and honesty were lost.

The girl's story of her sorrows was a sad one,

and the night passed more quickly in conversation with her, as she was very interesting, although she could not speak English plainly. Towards morning we fell asleep, in spite of the cold and discomfort.

Dawn came at last, and there was a stir all up and down the line, men swearing and dogs barking. Camp-fires were started as far ahead as we could see, but breakfast was a slow process, as snow had to be melted for water, and one thing cooked at a time. The girl and I did not light a fire, as there happened to be no birch bark or wood near us, and the snow was too deep at this point to leave the beaten trail, so we made our breakfast ofhardtack and frozen chipped beef.

About half past nine the line moved on, perhaps for a quarter of a mile, when suddenly one of the horses ahead turned completely around in his harness, and decided to come back. This upset many sleds, and it was nearly twelve o'clock before we got started again. After that there were one or two short delays, and we reached White Pass, only to find every stopping-place and roadhouse full to the brim. It was impossible to even get into the door of any place of shelter.

At this time ten thousand people occupied the

town, while today all that remains to mark the spot are a few old tent frames, with remnants of canvas flying in the air, giving it a ghost-like appearance to anyone who had passed through the town in its booming days.

Away off at one part of the town I could see a large tent-house, seemingly unoccupied, so leaving the dogs to watch our outfit, the girl and I forced our way through the snow to this tent-house, and found it fastened up. We broke in the door and it proved to be an unoccupied gambling house, so I returned for the dogs and outfit.

We made our bunks on the gambling tables, for the howling wind drifted the snow through the cracks in the floor, being in some places a foot deep. There was no chance for a fire in this tent, so we ate supper of frozen food, and although wrapped up in blankets, with our clothing wet with sweat, we suffered all night from the cold, and shook like dogs on a door mat, until our flesh was sore with shivering. Such are the pleasures of Alaska. ✓
We were glad to get up in the morning and resume the journey.

As we started out, we met a packer with whom I was slightly acquainted, who was to stay over

night at White Pass on his way back to Skagway from the summit. He had an extra horse, which I asked him to lend me to pull my outfit the remaining two and a half miles to Summit Lake, where there was a road-house called Camp Rescue, with the agreement that I would return the horse to him that night — for my two dogs were exhausted, being green in the harness, and not natives of Alaska.

The rest of the way to the summit I walked ahead and led the horse on the narrow trail, and the girl kept the sled from upsetting by holding the handles, which were fastened on the back of the sled, like plow-handles.

She was always cheerful, although her breath had frozen into icicles on her blonde hair, which clung around her face, and now and then when she put her shoulder against the load on the sled to steady it, I realized what a helpmate a woman could be after all, and only wished she were mine.

In this manner we struggled up the trail, until we reached Camp Rescue about half past four in the afternoon; but when I had a look at the place, I wanted to change the name to Camp Devil, for every man there seemed to be drunk. It was a large tent, about 40x60 feet, pitched in the middle of

Summit Lake, on the ice, and in it there were bunks, cook-stove, long table and a bar; dogs so thick under foot one could hardly step; men swearing, smoking, and drinking, all in one room—but it was this or nothing, so we ventured in, and were served with a good hot meal, the first warm food we had tasted for two days.

The bunks in this road-house were made of canvas stretched across poles, one tier above another. I selected one of these for the girl, as far away from the drinking crowd as possible.

"Now, little girl," I said, "I must return with the horse, and will have to leave you here with this drunken bunch."

"I tank I be all right, for when I come in they don't swear no more," to which I replied, "Well, I will come back tonight. You can depend upon it."

Just then a man stuck his head in the door, shouting, "Who in h—— does this horse belong to? Are you going to let him stand out here and freeze to death?"

"No, sir," I said, "I'm going to return down the trail to White Pass with him tonight."

"Then you'll stay down there tonight, will you?" he inquired.

"No, I will come back."

"You may think you will, but you'll never get back here again tonight, for it will be thirty below zero, and dark as a dungeon, and you'll do well to make White Pass before dark, without trying to get back here."

These last words I could hear in the distance, for I had already hit the loose horse a cut, which started him at a gallop down the trail towards White Pass, while I followed close at his heels.

On my way down the trail, I met one or two men who advised me not to undertake the trip so late, as I would not be able to find my way back in the dark; but I was as good as my word. I had promised to return the horse that evening, so I hurried on down the trail to White Pass, which was easy. Finding the man, I returned his horse, and told him I had to get back to Camp Rescue that night.

"You can't make it," said he, "for it is so dark already that you cannot see the trail, and you will surely get lost."

I told him that I must return, even at the risk of my life,—so to help me, he gave me a lantern. I had gone only a few yards, however, before it went out.

It seemed impossible to light it again, for the wind was blowing a gale, so I threw it aside and looked around me. All was darkness now, save the snow under foot that stretched ahead of me like a great sheet—while overhead I could see a few stars, with now and then a fleecy cloud—and the canyon was full of silence to the ridge. But I started on, as I thought that I must get back. I had left my new-found charge in a den of drunkards, and at their mercy, with no one to protect her; and I could see them insulting her, pulling her out of her bunk, and forcing her to drink; and with this picture before me, I was bound to reach the camp that night.

I had gone only a short distance when I found myself in three or four feet of snow, and then realized that I was off the trail. Looking around me, I saw that all was white and level, resembling a prairie covered with snow. Seemingly, there was no up hill, down hill, or trail. I could not tell which was forward or backward; in what direction I had come; or in what direction I should go.

A little distance from me was a scrubby tree that I thought I remembered passing on my trip

that day, and in attempting to reach it, I continued to struggle through deep snow, without finding any trail. But I soon realized that I was going up hill, and then remembered that the beaten trail was below this tree, so started down hill again. A little further on, the snow slipped under my feet and I slid over the edge of a rock and fell about fifteen feet, landing on one knee. Fairly screaming with pain, I undertook to get up, but could not stand on my right leg, so sat down and felt around me. I found that by this accident I had landed on the hard trail again, but was now crippled so badly I could not walk, and there seemed nothing left for me but to freeze to death on the trail, as many had done before me, although I never could make up my mind to die, for of what use is a dead man? He can neither serve his God, his country or his fellowmen. I determined to live, so started on, crawling on my hands and one knee, dragging the other leg, and carefully feeling my way along.

Presently I shoved my hands into loose snow, which seemed to be all around me, yet a moment before there was a good trail. This puzzled me, but feeling ahead under the snow, I knew it must be a drift that the wind had blown across the trail. I

was convinced of this, for under the snow I could still find the prints of the horses' shoes.

So, in this crippled condition, I clambered over the snowdrift, and crawled on, stopping now and then, as the frost-fiend nipped my fingers, to whip my arms around my body to keep from freezing. Once or twice I gave up, thinking it impossible to reach the summit, but again I thought of the weaklings who often died on the trail. Was I one of them, to give up like this? Must I lie down here and fail? No, no, not yet, so I blindly groped along in the dark, despite the wind and cold. Hour after hour I felt my way along the trail with bare hands—for I had taken off my mittens, as they were wet and frozen. I slowly worked along a few feet at a time, until in the distance I heard a dog barking; and then I wished that I had brought my leader dog with me, for he could find a trail day or night.

Suddenly I felt the snow slipping under my hands and again fell about twelve feet, and this time must have landed on my head, for I was stunned and lay in a stupor for I don't know how long. When I became conscious, I found myself on a sled, and the little Scandinavian girl, Minnie, driving my two dogs toward the summit.

She explained that as my leader dog kept up a constant barking, she grew worried, and hitched him up with the other dog and started to find me. He came straight to me, although she tried to keep him on the trail, but in spite of her he took the "railroad cut," into which I had fallen.

Dawn was now breaking, and I looked up at her as she stood on the back of the sled between the handle bars, cracking the whip in the frosty air and shouting to the dogs, "Mush on! mush on!"

"You are surely a friend in need, and I owe my life to you," I said.

"No, no, not to me," she answered, "but to the dog, for if I did not come he come alone."

I closed my eyes again, my head being dizzy from the fall; and the two faithful dogs, with the aid of the little girl, soon brought me in front of Camp Rescue. The leader dog whined and jumped on me, licking my face and trying to show me that he, too, was my friend, for at times he was very jealous of little Minnie.

I found that anxiety about my little companion left alone at the road house was unnecessary, for I learned that *a woman is safer in Alaska in the company of a drunken miner, than she would*

be left alone with the average so-called gentleman in a city.

After two days' careful nursing, I was able to go on the trail again, so we headed for Log Cabin, although my leg was stiff for the rest of that winter. However, being forced to use it constantly, by spring it was as good as ever. As usual, on the trail before us and behind us were long lines of teams and people, working their way to the gold-strike. We had not gone more than three miles when there came another blockade, similar to the one on the summit. We were forced to stay there until night, but it was moonlight, and a little distance from us we could see teams returning on another trail. I suggested to Minnie; that as we had no horses, we might work our way across through the deep snow, until we reached the other trail.

When we started, one of the horses from a load ahead broke loose and followed us like a dog, and appeared to be afraid to leave us. Our load was heavy, and the tired dogs wanted to rest, which they did very often, and every time we stopped the horse waited for us. At last we decided to hitch him up to the sled, so pushed it to one side

of the trail as far as possible, and by a good deal of effort got the horse past the sled, then hitched the rope to the traces. I sat on the front of the sled and held the traces apart with my feet, to keep them from rubbing the horse's legs, and I tell you we made camp fast, for all he needed was a driver.

The horse seemed to realize how careful he had to be, with our little camp sled hitched close to his heels. Every now and then one of his feet would go through the beaten trail into the soft snow, and he would fairly leap into the air, to keep from floundering. He took us right through to Log Cabin without a stop.

I did not know whose horse it was, but took it straight to the stable and reported it just as it happened, and the owner found him a few days afterwards.

The next day we heard of the big strike in the Atlin country, British Columbia. Instead of continuing our journey to Dawson, I persuaded Minnie to accompany me to the Atlin country, which was only a short distance of ninety miles, explaining to her that we could at least make some money there, as we were short of funds, and it would be best to go down the Yukon River in the spring, when we

could go by steamer and pay our fare. She consented, and we made our way from Log Cabin to Atlin; but took a new trail called the Toochi, that came out at what was known as Windy Arm.

When we were half way to Windy Arm, there came a big snow-storm, compelling us to lay over until some heavy teams passed that way to break the trail, for it was impossible for us to pull our outfit through the soft snow. While there, several other outfits caught up with us, and Minnie, the only woman, did the cooking for the crowd, receiving one dollar for each man she served, for a woman's cooking in that country is more highly appreciated than any treat that could be offered. We saw a grand opportunity here to "make a stake," so pitched our tents, then made a cabin of logs and brush, and started a road house that was afterwards nicknamed the "Dodge Inn."

We stayed there three months, buying our provisions from passersby, and feeding the hungry teamsters, as they worked their way to the big Atlin strike. We made one kind of soup three times a day for three months and it was always appreciated, for there was a new man to eat it at each meal.

The trail crossed Lake Toochi, which was a treacherous lake, sometimes freezing to the bottom and overflowing, then freezing a thin layer of ice that would not support the weight of a man. Often the stampeders, getting lost from the trail, would break through and their feet would be frozen before help could arrive.

My leader dog must have been some relation to the St. Bernards on the Alps, for he would always set up a bark and howl if anyone was lost on the lake, just as he did when he found me, stunned and half frozen, on the summit. Many a night I was awakened from a sound sleep to work myself into a heavy sheepskin coat, or perhaps a parka, hitch up the dogs, and start over the lake in total darkness, trusting entirely to my leader to hunt up some freezing man who was crying for help—and he always found him.

This leader, Stub, as I called him, took delight in this work, and always seemed to realize what it meant. Many a frozen-footed man I have brought into camp in the night, when perhaps my own feet would be soaking wet, and frost-bitten. On reaching the cabin I would pack their feet in a box of ice, set them close to the roaring fire in the Yukon

stove, and give them a big bowl of that famous soup. If any of you who were there happen to be reading this story, I wish to tell you that this soup was made of canned horse. It would have been worth my life to have told you at that time.

The temptation of money caused us to remain on this trail too long, and the warm sunshine ate holes in the ice, until it was not safe. In Alaska, they say the "ice-worm is doing its work," and many a newcomer believes it. However, there really is a snow-flea.

The Chinook winds came early, and the trail on the lake broke up so quickly that we were forced to blaze a new trail through the woods, and pack the outfits on our backs part of the way, but eventually we reached Caribou Crossing, a place well-known to "sour-doughs," or old-timers.

Remember that this was in the days before railroads existed in that country, even before Rackett took possession of the trail out of Skagway and made it into a toll-road, even before Porcupine Hill was used for a trail—about the time that Soapy Smith was shot in Skagway.

You don't know Soapy Smith? Why, he and Concertine and Chancy were the originators of the

Order of the National Bird in Skagway; but the Order of the Arctic Brotherhood, law-abiding citizens, put them to flight by shooting the leader, Soapy Smith. They buried him outside of the graveyard, where his remains lie unto this day, despite the thousands and thousands of brother National Birds, who promised to be loyal to their dead. There is a little square post at his head, and it is always pointed out to visitors with shame; for a greater outlaw was never known in Alaska than the leader of the Soapy Smith gang; but none of them were ever permitted to set foot on Canadian soil with the knowledge of the mounted police, for these outlaws had as bad a reputation as the Jesse James gang.

One hard day after another passed, and as the warm summer days came, we at last landed safely in Atlin. There were thousands of disappointed and heartbroken people here, some of them with too much outfit, and some of them with none. I was never the person to give up when I had started anywhere, so continued my journey seven miles up Pine Creek to Discovery, and on my way was forced to climb a long, steep hill, for at that time the trail passed this way. At the top of the hill, exhausted and thirsty—I was never so dry in my

life—I would have given a dollar for one drink of water; but there was none to be had. There were hundreds of people passing this way, each one with the same thirst. This gave me an idea, so I decided to pitch camp again at the top of this hill, and sell water, or lemonade.

I searched for the nearest watering place, and found a spring about a quarter of a mile down a steep hill. Catching a loose, abandoned horse, of which there were plenty, I made a harness out of gunny sacks and ropes, and with his aid, dragged some logs to a favorable spot on top of the hill. Here I built my road-house, the lower part being of logs, and the top of canvas. Then I rigged a windlass and tramway to hoist the water from the spring to the top of the hill, so that it would not have to be carried, and sold lemonade by the glass for twenty-five cents, the smallest piece of money ever used in that country. Like the non-plussed milkman, when shown a cow and asked what it was, if you had shown me a lemon at that time I would not have recognized it, having used citric acid.

We made money hand over fist that summer, but pretty soon the country went to smash, when

the Alien Law was passed. The American people would not appreciate the fact that what was good for the goose would be good for the gander; and when the British Columbia law said that an American had to become a British subject in order to stake mining property, they objected; nevertheless, a Britisher has to become an American to stake mining property in the United States. The Americans could not see it this way, and so abandoned the country.

CHAPTER II.

STORM ON THE LAKE.

There being no more lemonade business for us, we packed our remaining outfit, and Minnie and I, with others, worked our way from Atlin to Dawson on a scow, which was built and owned by an old sea captain, who had his own ideas about a scow. He put on a large mast like a sailing vessel, used the fly of a tent for a sail, and a rudder like a canal boat, and after it was finished it looked like a Chinese junk. The sail was made fast to the sides of the scow with blocks and tackles at the lower corners. We sure could go some when we had a fair wind, and the jolly old tar, with a row of whiskers under his chin, stood at the rudder. We had another smaller scow hitched on behind, towing it; and we sailed calmly across the Atlin lake and floated through Atlin River into Lake Bennett.

Part way across Lake Bennett, we came to the

outlet, where it empties into Lake Le Barge. We had no more than entered this body of water when a strong breeze sprang up, and the old captain, with his grizzled face beaming, exclaimed: "Ah, lads, there's a fair breeze off shore, and we'll make the thirty miles across this lake in three shakes of a lamb's tail."

While none of us knew anything about this lake, we had our bearings. As we got out toward the center, the wind blew harder and harder, and riding ahead of the wind, reminded me of a whaling vessel, when the crew would "split the sheet." This is a term used by sailors when a sail is thrown both ways, a very dangerous thing to do, and only undertaken by expert sailors on cod-fishing and whaling vessels.

Our big, square sail was as large as the scow, and it creaked and groaned as the wind, in its fury, fairly split the water and sent the spray dashing over the sides of the scow.

Soon the wind became so strong that the old captain shouted, "Lower the sail!" but it was too late. He had no more than said this when the ropes holding the sail to the scow on either side broke, and the sail went into the air, beating and whipping

like a great flag over our heads.

I will never forget that beating sound, as the old captain, for the third time cried out, "Lower that sail!" but try as we might, it would not come down.

"Then go aloft and lower it!" he screamed.

So I scaled the mast in that terrible wind, and by cutting one of the ropes, lowered the cross-arm and sail with my weight. There was such a strain on the canvas, as it beat in the air, that even with my weight the rings slipped but slowly down the mast, and when my feet touched the deck again, I could not stand from exhaustion. The force of the wind was so great that it blew our scow the rest of the way across the lake without a sail, and landed us high and dry on the beach.

After two days' hard work, we succeeded in launching it again, and entered the Yukon River. We floated easily along until we reached Miles Canyon, shot the dangerous White Horse Rapids, and dashed our way through Five Fingers, all well known places along the Yukon River.

So in the year 1898 we landed in Dawson City, Yukon Territory, commonly called "Klondike," an Indian word meaning "rich find," and used by the Indians of that country in the same manner as the

word "Eureka" was used by Christopher Columbus, upon his landing in America.

An Indian always exclaims "Klondike" over any new-found treasure, whether it be gold, a pair of recovered moccasins, or a new sweetheart. Use being the law of language, "Klondike" was eventually adopted to name the district of which Dawson is the center, covering a space of only a few miles. It is known to the people there as the Yukon Territory, down to Forty Mile (which is the dividing line between Alaska, which belongs to the United States, and the Yukon Territory, which belongs to Canada.)

CHAPTER III.

LANDING IN DAWSON CITY, YUKON TERRITORY.

We landed in Dawson, cold, wet, and hungry, after floating down the Yukon River from Atlin. It was in the fall of the year, and our scow was one of the last down the river, and we daily expected it to be frozen in, before we could reach Dawson.

My complete outfit consisted of a sled and two hundred pounds of provisions, my blankets and three dogs. We were stranded for several days on the sand bar of an island in the Yukon River, where we found and adopted a poor, starved dog, which had either been abandoned the winter before, or had strayed from some camp.

Upon landing in Dawson I had a big responsibility, but only possessed two dollars. In those days that amount did not go far, for fresh potatoes sometimes sold for one dollar apiece, and other things in proportion.

Just about dark, I met a man whom I had known slightly in Skagway, Alaska, and he showed me an empty log cabin, in which he said we might bunk, until a more suitable place was found. At that time I did not explain that the girl with me was not my wife, and it would have made but little difference anyway, as very few couples in that country were married. They would simply pick up a companion and go on seeking a fortune, trying to stick strictly to their own business. So, through the slush and snow, we, pulling our outfits, followed our new-found friend.

When we reached the cabin and opened the door, to our surprise, there were other occupants—a young Jew from New York, and a tall Englishman, the kind commonly known as a "remittance man," usually an undesirable citizen in the mining country. His allowance from home had been suddenly cut off, and his relatives had sent him to Dawson to try and make a fortune, or to get rid of him, it made but little difference which.

We were about to withdraw, when the Englishman exclaimed, "Say, old chap, what's your hurry? We have no more bloomin' right here than you, doncherknow. The blasted Irish landlord has gone

down the river, and, bah Jove, we've taken possession of the bally place. We're mighty glad to have you stay, as it is beastly lonesome, doncherknow. There's room for all of us," and sure enough there was. With one bed above another, made of poles and covered with a thick layer of native moss, we could spread out our blankets, and each one have a separate bunk.

The Yukon stove near the door kept the cabin comfortably warm, but now and then a gust of wind would sift the snow through a crack in the door. The cabin had a sod roof and a dirt floor, with the only window covered with a flour-sack. But in spite of all this, I was never so happy in my life, and with the Indians, I could say "Klondike" over my new-found home. As I sat there on a box and looked into the pretty blue eyes of little Minnie, how I wished she were mine.

The next morning, bright and early, I was awakened by Stub, the same dog who found me on the summit, licking my face to see if I were alive; for I was sleeping heavily. Realizing that a great deal depended upon me, I arose, and as I did so, the Jew crawled out of his bunk, and suggested, "If you'll furnish the grub, I'll get breakfast for the crowd," to which I consented.

There had been a heavy fall of snow that night, and we were not able to get any wood, as the remittance man always put off until tomorrow what he should have done today, and had not taken the trouble to gather any wood with which to get breakfast. So we hewed off some of the inside logs of the cabin, and soon had a roaring fire. With our evaporated potatoes soaked and ready to fry, in less than half an hour we had a good breakfast of fried potatoes and bacon, black coffee and sour-dough pancakes.

While we were eating breakfast, the remittance man informed us that he had been in and around Dawson for over two months, and that all the gold-bearing ground had been located and staked. He continued: "The only opportunity for a man in this blasted country at present, is to get into some kind of business, or go to work at some beastly job for wages, doncherknow, although there is a jolly big gold strike at Nome, and you know, I have chanced to meet an old miner, who has plenty of gold and wants to make the trip in the spring. Blow me if he isn't willing to furnish the supplies for any parties who will go with him on

his grub-stake. So a capital plan is to find something to do until spring, and if all reports are true, with the old duffer, Donovan I believe is his name, we will follow the ice down the Yukon River to Nome in the spring, doncherknow, and blast me if I can't see a fortune ahead of us. It is easy, like 'getting money from home'."

The Englishman was a good talker, and soon convinced us "Chee-cha-kos," or greenhorns, that this was the proper thing to do; but Minnie, with her sweet smile, said, "I tank I not go. I stay here—I find my brudders, I not know, but I tank so."

She then related her story to the Englishman and Nathason, the Jew, whom we afterwards called "Ike," for people in that country were not known by their surnames, but by some peculiarity of their clothing, or looks, dialect or nationality, such as the "Evaporated Kid," "Nigger Jim," "Big Aleck," "Crazy Charley," "Green Swede," "Curly Munroe," "Gypsy Queen," etc.

The Englishman asked Minnie to describe her brothers, which she did, and he exclaimed:

"Bah Jove, little girl, I know them, or did know them. One of them has gone down the river to Nome. They called him the "Big Swede." The

other chap, the "Little Swede,"—it is deucedly awkward, doncherknow, to repeat what your brother told me—was frozen to death in an alley back of Tom Chisholm's saloon and gambling house. He wandered out of the back door unnoticed by the bloomin' booster of the saloon, and met his death. It was a beastly cold night, so I heard, and upon my word it usually takes only about twenty minutes for a drunken man to freeze to death in this country, doncherknow."

"Why," said I, "I always understood that whiskey kept out the cold." I was trying to get up a discussion to take little Minnie's mind off the sorrow and grief which this knowledge might bring her.

The Englishman answered, "Bah Jove, whiskey makes you think the cold is not there, but my word, Jack Frost is getting in his work more than ever."

These remarks were apparently unnecessary, for Minnie smiled sadly, and said, in her broken English, that perhaps it was best, for poor Augustus had had a hard time in life, caused from a craving for alcohol. Then she related some of the suffering he had brought upon himself.

After breakfast, upon opening the cabin door, we found the snow to be drifted as high as the roof. However, a tunnel was soon dug through the drift of snow to the main trail; and the Englishman went to find the miner who proposed to grub-stake a party to go down the river to the beach diggings at Nome, in the spring.

Realizing that I had to get some money and get it quickly, because the few supplies I had would soon give out, I started to look for work. The Jew volunteered to get some wood, of which we were very much in need, and Minnie thought she would try to make the cabin look more like home, which she surely did.

Now, Dawson differed from any city in which I had ever lived. There is no need of describing it, for this has already been done by better writers than myself, although perhaps I spent more time in that country than they, and had more knowledge of real hardships and mining life, but my descriptive ability is not equal to theirs, so I can simply wander on, and tell plain facts of my personal experience, as an honest, rough miner would do.

I was not a man who was used to going to saloons or gambling houses. As I had often said, I

never visited churches or saloons, never prayed or swore, but always did everything I could for the benefit and welfare of my fellow-men; and the good I did was for the good it would do, not for the sake of a reward, either here or hereafter.

As I had never drank or gambled, it seemed to me very queer to come in contact with this class of people; but everybody in Dawson, except the respectable women, who were few, visited the saloons. Even Minister Pringle preached his occasional sermon in one. He covered the bottles and glasses with a sheet, then used the bar for a pulpit. It was against the law to sell liquor on Sunday, so a saloon could be converted into a church on that day without inconveniencing the saloon-keeper. Finding it was not uncommon to visit such places, I, too, wandered into a big saloon and gambling house, of which there were plenty in those days.

This was a well-lighted room, about one hundred feet long, and forty feet wide, with gambling tables of many kinds down each wall; and a big wood stove, made from a fifty gallon coal-oil tank, in the middle of the floor, with a bar close to the door on the left-hand side, as you entered.

A pile of four-foot wood back of the big stove furnished a seat for some of the half-frozen prospectors.

Up in one corner, a long, lanky fellow played an old-fashioned dance tune on a piano that sounded more like a dulcimer. Nevertheless, his music had sufficient hum-drum to keep the miners in the place.

I visited several saloons, but did not see an opportunity to make any money around such places, so went up a side street, where I found a tin-shop.

"Hello, boss," I said, upon entering, "can you give me a job?"

"Are you a tinner?" he asked.

"Ye-es," I rather hesitatingly replied, for I realized that if I should say no, I would not get a chance, and trusted that he would put me at some work I could do, for at one time I had worked at the trade, although I had never finished it.

"Well, there is an idle bench, and you can go to work making Yukon stoves and galvanized iron buckets. The patterns are hanging up over there, and your wages will be ten dollars a day."

Fortunately for me this was the class of work I had done before, but as for the wages, it seemed

too good to be true—too much money. The last time I had worked at the tinning trade, I earned two dollars and fifty cents a day, and thought I was doing well; but ten dollars looked like a small fortune to me, in my condition, so I went to work.

That night I went to the boss and told him I was out of money, and asked if he would pay me for my one day's work, which he did, on the promise that I would return the next morning. I did this partly to be sure I was not mistaken in the amount I was to receive, but afterwards I found that ten dollars was a mechanic's wage in that country.

I worked for this man about six weeks, during which time Minnie cooked for the Englishman, Ike the Jew and myself; and a better little housekeeper I never met. Our every want and need was attended to. She provided a good meal out of almost nothing, and kept our clothes washed and mended. In the evening she sometimes entertained us by singing Swedish songs, although most of my time was devoted to teaching her to speak English, which she grasped readily, and it was indeed one of the greatest pleasures of my life to be able to give this help to one who was becoming so dear to me. As

I watched her lips repeating the words I taught her, I only wished I could teach her to love me as easily.

I had brought with me from Atlin a large phonograph and a number of records, and often gave the miners in our neighborhood a concert, which helped them to pass the long winter evenings. When I would get through with my work, and my acquaintances would ask me to join them to take in the town, I would always refuse, telling them that I had a sweet little girl waiting for me, and that they could not appreciate the pleasure and happiness connected with knowing that a congenial and adorable sweetheart was keeping a good supper warm, while watching and listening each moment for my coming.

They would laugh at me in a way ; but down deep in their hearts, they surely recognized some of the happiness that I enjoyed.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE MONTHS IN A GAMBLING HOUSE.

One evening, as we were all gathered around the Yukon stove in our cabin, I said to the remittance man, "What might your name be? I've heard you called Bill."

"My name might be Claude LaMotte," he answered, "had it not been for a blasted miner for whom I was pulling a sled on the trail. You see, it was like this: It was a bloomin' hard trail, and we had a heavy load to pull. In fact, we were moving by hand, as we had no dogs. Blow me if I wasn't hitched up to the sled pulling, and my pal, you see, had hold of the handles steering and keeping the sled on the trail—which was a deucedly hard thing to do, doncherknow. It tired the patience of my pal, until finally he shouted at me, 'Say,' says he, 'what on arth be your name?'

"I, myself, was not in the best of humor, so turning around in my harness and looking the

bloomin' fellow square in the face; answered, 'My name is Claude LaMotte, if you please.' Blow me if the drotted chap didn't reply, "That's too nice a name for a horse, so I'll call you Bill; and Bill, for God's sake stay in the middle of the trail." From that time on he called me 'Bill'; so Bill it is—and what's the bloomin' odds so you're 'appy?"

The next day was Saturday, and Bill suggested to me, "I say, old chap, let's take in the town while I have an opportunity, for tomorrow I am to take a seventy-mile jolt to Henderson Creek, and God knows if I'll ever see Dawson again, for it isn't every man who returns from a bally trip of that sort, doncherknow. Blow me if yesterday I didn't see your friend Jack, the teamster, who brought you up to this cabin. He just returned from Henderson Creek, where he lost both of his feet, and the poor beggar was trotting about on his knees when I saw him last night."

"Why, what happened to him?"

"My word, but he was caught in a blizzard on Stewart River, and frozen in for three days. He was picked up by the mounted police, who were patrolling the river, and taken to Stewart City, at the mouth of the river, where he had the

useless clay removed, doncherknow, and upon my word, he can get around quite lively on his knees. But for all that, blow me if the mounted police haven't given him a blue paper, which means that he has to leave the country on the first boat up the river in the spring. You know, no bloomin' cripples or charitable subjects are allowed to remain in this country."

"Yes, Bill, I've heard that is the law here."

He continued, "Jack tells me they are paying laboring men seven dollars a day and board on Henderson Creek, where the jolly big strike is on, so I'm starting in the morning, doncherknow. Before I'll be off, I'd like to take one last good look at Dawson by candlelight, for the fascination it has for me I can't well shake off."

So we started out, although it was not yet dark, and real life did not commence until the candles were lighted.

On the way from our cabin to the main part of town, Bill, who prided himself on his knowledge of Dawson, took a delight in showing me the points of interest along our route.

The first one was a land-slide, under which he declared a tribe of Moosehide Indians were buried.

It can plainly be seen as a background in any picture of Dawson.

Another was the deserted cabins on the hill back of the town, where he pointed to the ice coming out of the stovepipe holes in the roof.

"What's the cause of that, Bill?" I asked.

He explained that the ground freezes outside of the cabin first, shutting off the seeping water from the surface. Then the water finds its way through the floor of the cabin, and freezing as it rises, fills the cabin full of ice. Sometimes this ice rises so fast in a cabin that the occupants cannot keep it out, and have to desert their home.

"And then the cabins are useless?"

"Not so," said he, "they use them for ice-boxes to preserve the bodies of poor chaps whose spirits have gone outside. Their bodies will be taken out in the spring, when so requested by relatives or friends."

"Do you see this lad driving the slop-cart?" he continued. "He has a five-year sentence at that job. He used to own the finest saloon in Dawson, doncherknow."

"What did he do?" I asked.

"He got into a game of black-jack one night with

'One-eyed' Riley, and lost thirty thousand dollars. After that he lost heart, and allowed a bloomin' woman of the town to support him, until the mounted police found him out, and they gave him that drotted job for five years."

"But what is that soldier with a gun following him for?"

"Oh, to keep him on the job."

Just then five good-looking women marched down the street, followed by another mounted policeman, with a rifle.

"What have they done, Bill?"

"Oh, they are doing a term for pinching some drunk's poke of gold."

"Why do they drill them along the main street?"

"They are marching them from police quarters down to the barracks, to scrub up," Bill answered. "I hear one of them is doing twenty years."

By that time we had reached the saloon district, which was then the leading industry of Dawson. It was dark now, and the candles and lamps were glittering, with the miners wandering to and fro, some walking straight and talking crooked; and others walking crooked and talking straight, *showing some of the different effects that whiskey will have on the human system.*

Among other places, we went into one called the "Exchange," well known to every man who has ever been in Dawson. In this saloon was a fellow trying to play the mandolin, but he was so drunk he could hardly sit up, much less furnish music. The proprietor of the place, Harry Edwards, spoke to me, although he did not know me, which was no doubt his reason for speaking, in order to make a new customer, what he called a "live one"—the "dead ones" being those who had spent their gold dust and were laid out in some corner.

Then he called Bill and me up to the bar to have a drink, but I assured him that I had never learned to use liquor, and was too old to learn new tricks.

At this, he seemed to admire more than to dislike me, and asked me what I was doing. I told him that I was out of employment just now. Then I asked him if he didn't want a phonograph to put in his place of business.

He answered, "It is impossible to find anyone who would stay sober long enough to run it; and besides, no one in this country seems to know anything about a phonograph, anyway. There is many a man here who has never heard one."

I explained to him that I had a large phonograph and a lot of records, whereupon he offered me twelve dollars a day to bring it there and run it. My tinning job had given out, and I had been making short trips to the different creeks, in the hope of finding some open ground where I could stake a claim, but not having met with success, I decided to take up his offer.

The next Monday noon I started my big phonograph, with its six-foot horn, and thus excited the curiosity of the old "sourdoughs" and native Indians, who had never seen such a thing. For the first time "canned music" was heard by the people of Dawson City, and I received my nickname of "Professor." After that you could often hear the cry, "Professor, come up and have something," but the "Professor" stayed on his job.

The music brought the miners into the saloon in droves, until the place was crowded. The Exchange had never before had the business that the phonograph brought it.

At midnight, when I had put in twelve hours, I went up to the cigar stand, which was in the front part of the saloon, to receive my day's pay, as the agreement was that I should receive my wages in

gold dust every night. The proprietor beckoned for me to come to the bar, but again I shook my head and told him that he must not expect me to mix with the drinking crowd, for I did not associate with men when they were drinking.

The second day I was there a man came in, wearing on his coat a large celluloid button, on which was a picture of a woman and two little children. He walked over towards me while listening to the music.

"Hello, friend, is that a picture of your wife and babies?" I asked, pointing to his button.

"Yes, I left them outside, in the States," he replied, as his eyes moistened with tears, and continued, "I have mortgaged my home to come to this country, expecting to make a fortune; but so far I have not made any more than wages, which I send regularly to my family."

"Yes, there are hundreds of men in this country like you, homesick for their families," I replied.

While we were talking, a capper, or booster—a man employed by the saloon to encourage men to drink—asked him to come and have something, which he refused, saying that he was not drinking. A

few days after that, when "Swiftwater Bill" had invited everyone in the house to drink on him, I noticed my friend with the large celluloid button standing up to the bar having a smoke.

A little later in the evening, as I was running my phonograph, I called him over to me.

"Have you forgotten your wife and two little babies, waiting day by day for your return? With or without a fortune they want you to come back as good a man as when you left."

"Why do you say this to me, Professor?"

"Because I saw you whooping it up with the rest of the drunks."

"I was only taking a smoke," he replied. "Besides this, Professor, you are getting a living from this saloon, and have no right to interfere with the business of a place where you are employed."

What he said was the truth, and it found its way home. I said no more, but shut up like a clam and continued to grind my phonograph, trying to stick strictly to my own business, although it was impossible to shut my eyes to what was taking place about me.

A few days afterward I saw this man taking a glass of beer. Although there were crowds in the

place, sometimes as many as two or three hundred on the floor, yet from the platform on which I stood, my eyes involuntarily looked over the crowd in search of the man with the celluloid button on his coat. Until one night, after the crowd and smoke had cleared away, I saw my poor friend, in a drunken stupor, lying in a corner next to a pile of wood, with his face in the sawdust. I picked him up, but he did not know me. The capper and whiskey had done their work; the button was gone, and so was the man, and I hurried away and tried to forget the thing he was, and the man he used to be. For three months I played the phonograph and crowded the place.

Before I left Dawson, this man was cleaning spittoons and keeping up the fire in a saloon for his drinks and meals. He was one of the men you often meet who say, "A glass of beer will hurt no man. I can take a drink when I want to, or let it alone when I want to;" but when they get as far as this, they never want to let it alone. Their "want to" has been destroyed by alcohol, until they have no knowledge of what they want. Their bodies act instead of their brains. Better to say, a glass of beer won't hurt some men, but be sure

of your man, for fifty per cent. of the men who start on a glass of beer will follow this man's footsteps.

He no longer spoke of his family, and day after day I suppose those little babies were awaiting the return of their father, who would never come back; and even if he had, they would not have recognized him.

In this great world there are many willing to open their pocketbooks to charity, but few who are willing to open their hearts and give sympathy to those who have fallen.

The next day I ground my phonograph, not heeding the tunes it played. Time after time when I would play a selection which the crowd was particularly fond of, they would applaud and cheer me, shouting, "Three cheers for the Professor!" and offer to "set 'em up" to me, but I always refused. The proprietor had won several bets that there was no power in that country that could get me to drink; but for all that, I was earning my living entertaining a drinking crowd, the lowest occupation on earth.

At this saloon they kept a man at the back door, to prevent any of the drunks going out that way;

for there was hardly a week passed that some man, under the influence of liquor, did not freeze to death in the alley.

In conversation with this booster one day, I told him the story of Minnie and her brothers, and he remembered Augustus; that he had frozen to death in the alley back of Tom Chisholm's saloon.

"Do you know where she is?" he asked me.

"Yes," I answered shortly, for I wanted to change the subject.

"Is she good looking?"

I scarcely answered, for I was sorry I had spoken of her.

"A blonde, I'll bet," he continued, "most Scandinavians are."

I could feel my face burn with rage.

"How do you stand with her, solid? Say, Professor, why don't you get her down here? She could make more money than you can. You could afford to lay off. She can entertain the miners who are drinking, and make as high as twenty dollars a day in commission. She would get five dollars commission on one bottle of champagne alone."

By this time I was furious, and felt like jumping on the fellow and strangling him, but did not want

to show too much personal interest in her, so quietly replied, "If she were your sister, would you like to see her engaged in such an occupation?"

He answered, "If it were my sister it would be a different proposition."

Then I said, "Would you like to see a pure, innocent girl associating with a crowd of hooch-soaked miners, ruining her womanhood for the sake of a few paltry dollars?"

"Well," said he, "all these girls who are drinking here on commission were pure and innocent once, but got sadly over it just in time to make a little money for themselves."

I asked him to go away from me, as I did not want to hear his views on the subject any longer.

Next morning as I looked across the breakfast table at little Minnie's beautiful, pure face, and listened to her innocent words, I was ashamed to even think of the conversation that had taken place in the saloon. She had associated with me under many difficult circumstances, and had proven herself an honest, fearless, and good woman, one whom no man could speak ill of.

The saloon business commenced to have a horror for me, and I wanted to get out of it. I thought

of a packing-house in Armourdale, Kansas, that I had visited once, where they had an old buck sheep that would go up the runway where the sheep were slaughtered; and when he went up, all the others followed him. They were slaughtered, while this old Judas had a feed of oats and was driven down the runway again to bring up the next bunch.

So I figured out that I was this false leader, receiving my feed to decoy a bunch of men into this dive, to be slaughtered by the use of whiskey. It was then I decided that come what might I would change my occupation, even though twelve dollars a day was a serious thing to give up when I needed the money so badly.

When I told the proprietor of the place my intention he laughed at me, and said if I didn't furnish music someone else would. I informed him that I could not feel responsible for what somebody else did, but that I personally would not have anything more to do with such business. He then offered to buy the phonograph, but I refused to sell for that purpose, and picking up my outfit, went to the cabin, where I found Long Bill had just returned from Henderson Creek.

CHAPTER V.

SWORN BY THE DICTIONARY.

"Hello, Bill, did you get back?"

"Yes, but it was a beastly trip, doncherknow. Upon my word it has taken me three days."

"Yes, but these winter days are very short, not more than seven hours between daylight and dark."

Not heeding my remark, he continued, "I made the trip last summer across the mountains from Henderson Creek, which is sixty miles, in one day, and would have continued to go out to the Forks, which is sixteen miles farther; but the blasted dog I had following me gave out, and I had to stay in Dawson that night."

"You don't mean to say you made sixty miles in one day on foot, do you?" I asked.

"I made it from daylight to dark," he replied, "which was eighteen hours, for in the summer time here it is daylight most all night, and all you

have to do to make sixty miles is to keep on walking, doncherknow."

"It's a mighty cold night, so draw yourself up to the fire, Bill, and tell us how you made it on the creek. Have good luck?"

The fire crackled in the little Yukon stove, which was kept at a red heat all day and during the evening, but in spite of this the dirt floor of the cabin was frozen, while beads of perspiration could be seen on our foreheads.

"Yes," replied Bill, "it is deucedly cold. I see the frost is half way up the bloomin' door. What does it register?"

Little Minnie answered, "It is sixty-five below, for the frost reaches the third mark on the door."

"I say, Professor, where is the bloomin' thermometer?" was his next inquiry.

"Oh, it froze up and busted."

"Bah jove, is it possible! I missed it, doncherknow!"

"Come, Bill, tell us, did you strike it rich on Henderson Creek?" I asked.

"Well, hardly," he answered, "I did not get the job I went after, so went out prospecting and staked a claim which had been staked before, but aban-

doned. I went back to the bloomin' recording office to record my claim. My word, what do you think happened? I came blasted near having to serve a sentence, on a charge of contempt, for refusing to be sworn by the dictionary. A jolly good joke, doncherknow."

"A jolly poor joke, if you had been sentenced," I replied. "But how did you escape?"

"It was like this," he answered. "As I went in to record my claim, as usual, there was a long line waiting to get to the window. The chap who makes out the papers gets to be like a bloomin' machine, from saying and doing the same things over and over again, doncherknow; and as he dismissed one man after another, I heard him tell them to 'kiss the book—fifteen.' "

"What did that mean?" asked Minnie.

"Oh, when you record a claim you have to be sworn, kiss the Bible, and pay fifteen dollars to record your claim."

"Did you refuse to do this, Bill—you, a good British subject?" I asked.

"No, but blow me if I didn't remove the rubber band from the supposed Bible by which we were being sworn, and found it to be a Webster's diction-

ary. When I asked the recorder what kind of a Bible that was, he explained that they had lost their Bible and were using Daniel Webster's dictionary. I bet him all my holdings in the country that Daniel Webster never wrote a dictionary, or had anything to do with one. At this, the rest of the bloomin' miners who were waiting behind me threw me out of line, telling me this was no place for an argument."

"As I wandered away from the crowd," continued Bill, "I could still hear the chap at the little window crying out to each man as it came his turn, 'Kiss the book—fifteen, kiss the book—fifteen.' Each poor beggar would lay down his fifteen dollars; when possibly it was the last cent he had, kiss the book—or perhaps the back of his hand, which was cleaner—for if the recorder could hear the smack of the lips and see the fifteen dollars, all other mistakes would be overlooked, doncherknow."

"Did they continue to be sworn by the dictionary?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered.

"Well, Bill, isn't it generally thought that Daniel Webster wrote the dictionary?"

"Yes," he replied, "by the same people who apply

the name of Klondike to this entire country. The poor chaps don't know any better, doncherknow. There is many a man who passes his whole lifetime without knowing that it was Noah Webster who wrote the dictionary, and they think they are bloomin' smart, too."

"What did you do about it, Bill?" I questioned.

"Oh, nothing, I just returned to my claim and started to work. I thought perhaps the lad before me didn't find the gold, doncherknow, but that I would.

"At once I began to thaw the ground with a wood fire, and sink a prospect hole; when, to my delight, close by me if I didn't notice where a prospect hole had been sunk a year before, filled with water, and frozen solid.

"A capital idea overtook me, and I decided that to dig this out with a pick would be much easier than to build a fire and thaw the ground; for every foot I dug through the muck and gravel I would have to thaw, no matter how deep I sunk."

We all began to smile, and I asked, "Did you find anything when you got to bed rock?"

"Not a blasted thing."

"Why did you go down in the same hole, Bill?

Didn't you know if it was abandoned there would be no gold there? Why didn't you sink in a new place? Perhaps you would have found the pay streak."

"Well," said he, "it was easier digging."

When little Minnie thought we had laughed long enough at Bill's expense, she inquired of me, "Why did you bring your phonograph home?"

Then I related my experience to the family; but not one of them agreed with me. The Jew called me a fool, and asked me what I came to that country for if it wasn't to make money. I told him if I had to earn money by assisting in the downfall of humanity, that I preferred to remain poor, and that I did not care to discuss the subject.

Next morning we all gathered around the table, having that most remarkable appetite with which man is blessed in that country, and of which Long Bill seemed to have more than his share at all times. There was never any waste from the table when he was there, or nothing left over, although his diplomacy or manners were never forgotten. When all were through eating, he would pick up the mush-pot from the stove, in which there usually re-

mained enough for an ordinary man, and passing it to Minnie, he would say, "Won't you have a little more mush, Minnie, please? It is delicious, you know."

"No, thank you, Bill, I have all I want."

"You'll have some, my friend Nathason, won't you?" addressing the Jew.

"No," the Jew would reply, "I've had enough."

"Ah, then it is left to the Professor and me. He will never forsake me in time of need; we'll finish up the pot, won't we?"

"As much as I love you, Bill, and appreciate your friendship, I have quite a sufficiency. In fact, I feel crowded."

"Then it is left to me," Bill would say, "and I never have the heart or stomach to see food wasted, and always have a capacity to hold an extra supply."

And as he would empty the remainder of the mush into his plate, he made a few remarks about the little burnt part which he would scrape off from the bottom of the kettle, and how the rest of us were cheated out of the best part by having delicate appetites; and would assure us that there was no necessity for us to remain at the table, as he would

excuse us if we were uncomfortable.

Long Bill always thought more of the comfort and pleasure of others, than of himself. His generosity was displayed one day on a bitterly cold trip to Bonanza Creek, when he took off his scarf, cut it in two, and gave me half of it.

CHAPTER VI.

"PATENT PLASTER."

There was but very little honest business transacted in Dawson; it was all a run and grab and take from each other. I do not mean to steal, for that was a crime which was severely punished. A man could absolutely leave his outfit on the sidewalk for a week and no one would touch it, but buying and selling and cornering the market on certain supplies was the biggest industry, outside of the drink traffic. One Jew tried to corner the market on matches in the middle of the winter, but failed. Several times the market was cornered on fresh potatoes, which would sell for a dollar a pound.

So I took it upon myself to start in this line of business. I did not have the heart to try to sell whiskey, but thought I would try my luck at selling provisions. By this time I had a little money saved, and would buy and sell potatoes at a good profit, and made even more than I did with the phonograph.

One day, as I was buying some potatoes, I saw underneath them a lot of patent stovepipe, crated in bunches. I managed to buy all the man had, and made forty cents a length on it, cleaning up two hundred dollars in one afternoon, as this was the only stovepipe for sale in the town.

This gave me the idea how to do it, and I started out to find what there was a shortage of.

There was no way to ship supplies or provisions to Dawson in the winter, and if one could find any shortage in the market, it was profitable to buy up all of that article and hold it for a higher price.

One day I had an attack of toothache, and calling on my friend, the dentist, said, "Hello, Scotty, are you still fixing teeth?"

"Oh, I'm doing a bit of filling, but can't make any false teeth, for there is no plaster-of-paris to be had in the country."

"Why, is there any great demand for plaster-of-paris?" I asked.

"Indeed, it is absolutely necessary for all dentists and surgeons to use it. The false teeth business is rushing right now, for the scurvy, with which so many miners are afflicted, causes the teeth to drop out like marbles, and the gums to dent in like putty."

I could hardly wait until the dentist got through with me, so anxious was I to start out in search of plaster-of-paris, or some substitute for it. I called at one of the big company stores, and found that they had ordered three barrels; but when it arrived, it turned out to be patent plaster—so the clerk said.

I asked him if he would not let me see it, that I might make use of it. When he showed it to me, I gathered up a small handful and went to a drug store to ask what it was. The druggist told me that it was plaster-of-paris, and asked me where I got it.

Now, I did not want to tell this druggist where it came from, for if I did, that would prevent me from making any money on it, so I told him that I had fifty pounds of it, and it was of no use to me. He made me an offer of a dollar a pound for what I had, so I returned to the Company's store and asked them for fifty pounds of patent plaster, which they sold to me at twenty-five cents a pound.

They did it up for me, putting it on my dog-sled, and I returned and sold it to the druggist; then I repeated this at the next drug store. There were four drug stores in Dawson at ~~that~~ time, and every

one took fifty pounds of plaster-of-paris, each thinking he was buying all there was in the country. After each sale I would return to the Company's store and ask for some more patent plaster.

When I had finished the four drug stores and had sold two hundred pounds, the clerk at the Company's store asked me what I was doing with so much of that plaster. I told him that a foolish fellow down there was buying it from me, and that probably he intended to make a statue of Chief Isaac of Moose Hide.

As soon as I had supplied all the druggists in town, it dawned upon me that they would sell it to the dentists. Then I started out for the dentists, and supplied each of them with twenty pounds, telling them a story similar to the one told the druggists; till I came to the last one,—the Scotchman,—who had told me of the demand for plaster-of-paris.

Just as I was driving a bargain with him, the telephone rang and a druggist informed him that he had some plaster-of-paris now to sell, and that he would take two dollars a pound for it.

The dentist replied, "There is a man here now trying to sell me plaster-of-paris for a dollar a pound."

They had a little more conversation over the 'phone, which I could not hear, but which spoiled my last sale.

Altogether I had sold three hundred pounds, and had cleared seventy-five cents a pound. I dare say the druggists and dentists in that country are well supplied with plaster-of-paris to this day. Thereafter I was known in Dawson as "Patent Plaster," for the material I sold was plaster-of-paris, and the mistake was on the part of the N. A. T. Company's clerk, from whom I bought it, in not knowing plaster-of-paris when he saw it. In a way similar to this a great many people received their nicknames. It was a rare thing to know a man's true name in that country.

So I put in my time buying and selling canned goods for the rest of the winter, and made far more money than I did while engaged in the dishonorable business of the whiskey traffic.

All this time my heart grew more fond of little Minnie, and apparently she thought more of me; for she always waited and watched for me at the cabin door, and greeted me with her sweet smile and caress, which paid me for all my efforts and

trials. I had never before known the real happiness of a woman's love.

She had long since given up the hope of finding her brother in Dawson, and all we talked of was our trip in the spring; how we would go down the river to Nome, meet her brother, and make our fortune.

Occasionally the old miner, Donovan, would come up to our cabin, and tell us what he expected us to do and what we were to get and wear; and somehow his coming was always dreaded, for he seemed not to know as much as he pretended to—like a great many others in Dawson who, by mere accident, made a lot of money, regardless of the small quantity of brain they possessed. *It isn't the smart man who makes a fortune in a mining camp, but usually the fool, who cannot keep it.*

One evening as we sat in the cabin, there was a rap at the door, and all shouted at once, "Come in."

A tall, lanky looking Swede, dressed in overalls and a flannel shirt, with a corn-cob pipe in his mouth, pushed the door open. He said, "I am Charley Anderson, and I tank I want to see Swede girl lives here. I got one million dollars in gold, and I tank I make her purty happy."

Now I had heard of this Charley Anderson, who

worked as a laborer for wages at one time in that country, and managed to save eight hundred dollars. He came to Dawson with the first big rush, some gamblers got around him, and while he was drunk sold him a claim on the "Eldorado," about No. 7, above the "Discovery."

The next morning after this purchase, when Charley woke up from his stupid condition, he realized with tears that his eight hundred dollars in gold-dust were gone; and that all he had to show for it was the title for this placer claim.

As he was only a half-witted, green Swede, he at once hunted up the gamblers who had sold him the claim, and tried to force them to give him back his money, which they refused to do. Even the mounted police could do nothing for him.

Someone suggested that he go out and dig a hole on his claim, and see if he could find the pay-streak; and after a good deal of persuasion he did this, sinking the hole twelve feet deep to bed-rock. In the first panful of gravel, he washed out one thousand dollars in gold-dust.

He continued this work until he had taken out one million dollars, during which time he never changed his underclothes or his overalls.

Just think of a man dressed in a flannel shirt and overalls, with one million dollars, looking for a wife! It worried me a little bit. I did not know what temptation it might be to little Minnie; but when she looked him over, in her sweet way she dismissed him, and told him she was aiming for something higher in life than gold. So the green Swede returned to his claim, and later on married a girl out of a dance hall.

He took part of his money and bought No. 12 above, on Eldorado, which yielded a similar amount of gold to that of No. 7 above. Then he went to San Francisco and bought a handsome residence, and between the dance-hall girl, her capper, and the courts of San Francisco, Charley Anderson was forced to go back on the section-gang in the state of Washington at one dollar and seventy-five cents a day.

CHAPTER VII.

STARTING FOR NOME.

One morning in early spring, while eating breakfast, Long Bill informed us that he had been too long in Dawson; that it was time to start on that trip to Nome, where the big strike was on.

"I was down looking at the bally river yesterday," he said, "and the ice is all broken up, so that it will be possible to start as soon as we can interview Donovan and get our outfits together, doncher-know."

So in less than a week we were all packed up and ready to start on our long trip. As we left our cabin door, Minnie and I gave it one long, last look, realizing that the happiness we had known in the cabin would never be forgotten. I told her that I would be quite willing to remain in that cabin for the rest of my life if I could have her with me, regardless of fortune or other pleasures. But it was not to be, for her answer was, "No, dear, I feel

that I must make this trip. After that, I cannot say; it may be that our lives will be united. Did you ever have a dream of happiness just a little way ahead of you, that seemed for you, and yet you could not realize just what it was? My ambition is to lead a grand life, as a lady of the land—a princess, or somebody of note; for I believe that I have lived on this earth before, and filled that position, and that I am now reincarnated, and searching for my home."

I had heard her give hints before of her views on reincarnation, but did not pay much attention to it, thinking perhaps she had read it in some book; for she had been studying English day and night, and reading every book she could get hold of.

Her remarks bothered me considerably, for I knew there was no royal blood in our family. Long Bill tried to make out sometimes that there was in his; but I was sure she never gave him any encouragement. If she ever expected to be a great lady, I would either have to lose her, or she would have to be greatly disappointed.

We hurried down to the bank of the river, where our party, consisting of the old miner, Donovan, Long Bill, Ike the Jew, little Minnie and myself,

waved a goodbye to Dawson ; and were soon on our way floating down the Yukon, in a large rowboat, equipped with enough provisions to last six months, if necessary ; compass, guns, ammunition, field-glass, blankets, dogs, etc.

“Down” in reference to the Yukon and other rivers in that country means north, and there was no exertion connected with floating down the Yukon River in a rowboat, especially below Dawson. We simply laid back in the boat and told one story after another ; listened to Long Bill’s yarns of South Africa, where he had served four years as a Cape-mounted rifleman, talked of the riches we were going to obtain, and what we were going to do with them ; how we were going to pass the rest of our lives in retirement ; how much gold it takes to weigh a pound, and how much we would have if we had all we could carry.

We could listen to the gravel constantly rolling on the bottom of the river, and gaze at the snow-peaked mountains and high cliffs of rock on the right and the left. The trees hanging with black moss, with now and then a beautiful fall of water over a high cliff, coming from some mountain stream, made a picture rare indeed—one that will linger in the memory for a lifetime.

So in peace, and with pleasant prospects, we floated along until night, when we landed in a little clump of bushes, where we camped. As we were about to sit down on the ground to eat our supper, Minnie gave a jump and scream, which startled all of us.

"What is it, Minnie?" we all asked at once.

"I thought I saw a snake," she replied.

"Never fear," said Bill, "for the blessed St. Patrick must have visited this country, as well as Ireland, for we have no snakes or toads here. Even the Isle of Man could be jealous of Alaska, for here not only the blasted cats are born without tails, but the mice are bob-tailed, too."

After being assured that there were no snakes in Alaska, Minnie sat down with a peaceful mind and enjoyed supper with the rest of us.

The following morning we were early on our way, and thus we drifted on past Fort Yukon and a few smaller settlements until we reached the Yukon Flats, where the old miner, Donovan, *insisted* that we should keep to the right. At this point the Yukon is many miles wide, and forms a large swamp.

While we looked upon Donovan as boss, instructor and guide, nevertheless, there arose a hot discussion between him and Long Bill as to which shore of the flats to follow. The old miner declared the right was the one; Long Bill argued for the left, for it was generally known that on the left-hand side of these flats was the main stream.

However, after lengthy argument and discussion, we finally gave in to Donovan, and continued on our way by keeping to the right.

After uneventfully drifting along for three days, without finding a place to land, we commenced moving very slowly, and began to get anxious, wondering why the Yukon did not flow faster at this point.

Long Bill remarked, "Drot it, we are not in the Yukon River. 'Pon my word, the best thing we can do is to throw Dónovan overboard and return."

At this time I was not in for violence, but many times later on wished I had consented, for the old miner insisted he was right, and we continued on down the slow-running stream.

By this time we were compelled to keep gloves on, and our heads covered with netting, for the mosquitos were so thick we often had to brush them away in order to see each other.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOST IN THE YUKON FLATS.

On the fifth day, our boat was surrounded by a vast swamp of tall grass, growing in bunches, and commonly known in that country as "niggerhead." Raise what argument we might that we were going in the wrong direction, our guide and grub-staker insisted that he was right. On the sixth day, however, he consented to row back, but by that time we were down in among the "niggerheads" so far that we did not know which way to turn.

Now I had often prided myself on knowing east, west, north and south without the aid of a compass, but I could not think of contradicting it, and it seemed to point nearly opposite to the way I thought was north, so I gave up like a whipped dog, and followed the compass. Who could do better?

Knowing that we had traveled north down the Yukon, and northwest in entering the swamp, we

decided to travel southeast to get out of it, so we pointed our boat in that direction. A little later we all got into an argument as to which way we should go, and it ended by Ike, the Jew, and Donovan both insisting that we should travel directly north, where we would find land sooner or later. Bill gave in and consented to go north, which made three against me, so I gave up, but felt sure we were taking the wrong direction. However, I was in hopes to at least find land soon. The truth of the matter was that we were lost in a swamp, and so frightened that we were confused; but finally we headed our boat, according to the compass, directly north.

Little Minnie held the compass and told us when to go right or left, so after that we called her "Our Compass;" and many times I hoped that I would remain her attraction, and told her that I would call myself the "North Pole" and her the "Compass."

One night a peculiar incident occurred. When we had all rolled up in our blankets to go to sleep, I felt a rocking of the boat, and on opening my eyes, I saw little Minnie about to step over the edge of the boat, as if she were reaching for someone.

I seized her, pulling her back just in time.

"Minnie," I exclaimed, "what are you trying to do, drown yourself?"

"No," replied Minnie, "I thought I was following my prince, the hero of my dreams since childhood. He was beckoning for me to follow him, strewing my way with roses, and he said he would take me to his palace."

"Minnie, would you leave me for a prince?"

"Dearie, I am afraid I would if it were the prince I have just seen. But it was only a dream."

"I am very glad it was only a dream," I answered, "for I could not give you up."

Nevertheless, this dream started me thinking, and caused me to pass a restless night.

On the seventh day we seemed farther off than ever. The boat was propelled by pulling on the tall grass, growing in bunches on each side of the boat, so dense that at times we could scarcely get through. There were no mountains or trees to be seen; in fact, we could not at any time see more than five feet away from our boat, for these bunches of grass which encircled us were from six to ten feet high, and kept us from gaining any knowledge of our surroundings. The only thing left for us

to do was to follow the compass north, with the hope of finding land, or some river, even if it were not the Yukon.

So, trusting to the compass, we hurried on for days, awkward as it was for five people having to cook, eat and sleep day after day, with no opportunity to get out of the boat. The dogs, too, were restless and hard to manage.

To add to our discomfort, it rained every second or third day. We had one spell of wet weather which lasted three days without stopping. While it made us very uncomfortable, nevertheless it gave us a little rest from the mosquitos.

During some of this time, Long Bill lay on his back in the boat, and slept with his blanket over him, holding it up with a short stick so it would shed the water. The only time he ever complained was when he stuck his head out from under his blanket one morning, and said, "I say, this is deucedly awkward, doncherknow! It is the most shocking position I was ever placed in."

The rest of us had our blankets over our shoulders, which kept us warm, but not very dry. A square coal-oil can served us as a stove, and we used the dried grass for fuel.

The water was from four to eight feet deep, and in some places still deeper. With plenty of fish and ducks, we fared well.

Days passed into weeks, yet nothing else could be seen but tall grass surroundings, and we were quite sure that we had traveled from eight to ten miles a day, still forcing our boat along by pulling on the grass, which was close up to its sides.

We tried to build, with our outfits, a platform to stand on, so that we could see over the grass. Bill, being the tallest in the crowd, climbed up and tried to crane his long, lean neck above the waving grass, but his despairing cry was, "Not a blasted thing can I see but this bally grass!"

After one month had passed, and we had almost given up in despair, I noticed that the dried blades of the grass that floated on the top of the water all pointed in one direction. This made me think that the water was running that way, though if moving at all, it moved very slowly. So we continued on our way to the north, as we supposed, still following the compass, also following the current of water shown by the floating grass.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MYSTERIOUS SMOKE.

About the end of the sixth week, we noticed directly ahead of us in the sky, a terrific smoke, resembling a great forest fire at a distance. The Jew screamed with fear, "The grass has caught fire, and we are doomed!" and we knew if that were the case, we might as well give up hope. While we might save ourselves for a time by getting into the water, our outfits and boat would surely burn; and Bill suggested that it would be better to drown than burn; so the Jew began praying, and we all prepared to die.

While we were waiting in suspense for our impending doom, the sun sank slowly out of sight. It was indeed a sleepless night, for now added to the torment of the mosquitos and the aching of our limbs, caused by our cramped position in the boat, was the horror of thinking that at any moment the fire might be upon us.

When day dawned, great was our astonishment to see no trace of smoke, and we decided that the fire had gone out; so we still kept on in the same direction for another week. Finally an increase in the current was noticed, enabling us to travel faster.

We occasionally saw the smoke, but for us it had lost its terror. One evening it appeared more plainly than before, and seemed to rise in great clouds to the sky, then to die down again.

Long Bill immediately shouted, "It is the smoke from an active volcano! It must be!" Then he explained to us that when a young boy he had visited Vesuvius, and had seen that volcano in action.

On the fourth day after this could be seen, in the distance, a barren mountain, high and black, without a tree or any indication of foliage. Our hearts leaped with joy, for we knew that where this mountain stood there must be land, and what happiness it would be to stand once more on mother earth, a privilege we had never before appreciated.

In two more days our boat was traveling as fast as it did in the Yukon River, before we became lost in the swamp; and one morning we found our-

selves at the mouth of a stream, into which the swamp apparently emptied.

We were now floating at a rapid rate and knew that we must get out of the current, because as the waters narrowed, we sped on and on faster and faster, and through fear of being carried over falls, or perhaps into some rapids, an attempt was made to land. However, row as we might, with all our efforts it seemed impossible to get that boat out of the middle of the stream.

The river was running so fast at this point that it fairly rounded up in the middle. On ahead, we saw a large hill of grass such as we had passed through, which had drifted there from time to time; and the river, seemingly, ran directly under it, the grass floating on top of the water.

Our boat was heading straight for this hill of grass, and as the water fairly made a whirlpool in front of it, we saw no way to avoid being drawn under.

I stood in the bow of the boat with the rope in my hand, ready to make a leap when it struck the grass. We felt sure the boat and outfit could not be saved from going under, but hoped to rescue ourselves.

When I leaped onto the island of grass, it sank into the water with my weight. The force of the current caused it to break loose from the shore, and the great floating island went rolling and tumbling, through the seething torrent, down the river.

Long Bill, Donovan and Ike remained in the boat with Minnie, and took to the oars and the pole. Shouting to them to save themselves, I floated down the stream on the island of grass. But it soon brought up to the bank of the river again, where I made a leap for some overhanging moss and earth on the edge of the bank, which gave way, burying my legs and body under the water.

In the meantime, the boat had struck on the sandbar, which had caused the grass to lodge and accumulate there. Bill, seeing my danger, sprang out of the boat, and immediately snatched a rope and ran along the bank to my rescue, throwing me the rope, which I made fast around my shoulders. Donovan and Ike were soon to the rescue, and Long Bill gave his end of the rope to Ike, while he crawled down the bank to the water's edge, where he tugged and pulled at me; until, by the aid of the swift current, I was released from my perilous, half-buried position.

My legs were almost paralyzed from the cold water, and refused to carry me, so I was lifted by the three men and landed safely on the bank of the river, where they left me to recover, while they brought the outfits ashore.

As soon as Little Compass found that I was safe, she started a fire close by me to dry my clothes; and when she patted me on the cheek and looked into my eyes, I was sure that she loved me. Even though her manner had been a little cool of late, I had thought it due to the hardships and discomforts of our trip; and I felt then, that I was willing to remain in this desolate spot for life, if I were sure of retaining her presence and love.

I was soon on my feet, but fell again with weakness; and only after several efforts was I able to assist little Minnie with our meal.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER.

There never was a woman who could, under similar circumstances, prepare a meal with so little effort as Minnie, our Little Compass. She would sit down cross-legged by the fire, with pans and kettles surrounding her, and give the men orders, in her newly acquired English, which was very precise and correct.

“Long Bill, get a pan of water; and Professor, hand me that molasses can, which contains the sour dough. Now then, the salt and a little sugar. The flour is in that farthest sack; please pass that next,” and so on until the batter was the right thickness for pancakes; after which she poured back the same amount taken away from the sour dough, a custom necessarily followed by all miners in Alaska. Putting a little more flour in the batter, she stirred it thoroughly, and started the pancakes going.

“Professor, turn the pancakes, while I soak the

dried potatoes. Bill, open the canned meat, then bring more water."

Meanwhile Donovan and Ike were pitching the tent, and cutting and preparing a brush bed.

In an incredibly short time Minnie announced that the meal was ready, and never was food more thoroughly relished and enjoyed than this, our first feast on land.

We had almost forgotten how to walk, and indeed it had required a great effort to bring ourselves to realize that we were on land again. For the first time since entering the swamp we were able to remove our headgear of mosquito netting.

How well I remember that night. We could hear the roaring of the river and see the smoke of the volcano, which had frightened us so badly while floating in the swamp, yet we could realize that it was many miles away. The sun was visible all night, with the exception of one hour and forty minutes; and what seemed remarkable to us, was that it apparently set and came up again in the same place.

We did not undertake to go any farther for two days, but rested and tried to get our bearings, in order to determine where we were; but all that

country was new to us. On one side was the vast swamp, through which we had traveled so long; on the other could be seen nothing but lowlands covered with shrubbery, mostly blueberry bushes, which were loaded with fruit at this season. It is needless to say that we feasted on these berries, which were a great treat; in fact, the first fresh fruit we had tasted for a year. Moss berries and salmon berries were also plentiful.

One morning Long Bill went a little farther down the bank, looking for firewood, when suddenly he returned, exclaiming:

"'Pon my word, Professor, I have made a wonderful discovery! Gravel filled full of gold! Come and let me show you!"

So we all ran to see his discovery, and sure enough, the very gravel on which we were walking was filled with yellow streaks.

Picking up one of these pieces of gravel, and examining it, I noticed that the streaks were only on one side of it, but did not say anything, for I was not sure what had caused it.

Long Bill was very much excited, and immediately began planning how he would return to England and raise capital to build a railroad into this

country; how immensely rich he would be; how his relatives would envy him, and how he would be able to send them a remittance, thereby shaming them for cutting off his allowance, etc.

"Professor, what would Swiftwater Bill say if he could see this pay gravel?"

I did not answer, but as I sat listening to his wild dreams, I rubbed the yellow streak off the gravel with my wet fingers. Turning to him I said:

"Bill, let me see the bottom of your boot."

"Why?" asked Bill.

Poor Bill! It was just as I thought. There were brass nails in his boots that had caused these yellow streaks on the gravel.

Bill hardly spoke again that day, his entire hope having sunk into the brass nails in his boots. We all tried to cheer him, but with little result.

Donovan, who was supposed to be our guide, yet had gotten us into all this trouble, insisted that it would be perfectly right for us to get into the boat and go on down the river which we had discovered, and that eventually we would reach the Yukon or some lake. This I positively refused to do, whereupon he said that if I did not, he would take the outfits, food and all, inasmuch as they belonged to him, and go alone.

At once I told him that if he were in civilization he might do that, but where we were there was no law, and that I might as well die trying to prevent his doing this as to die of hunger; but Long Bill, Ike and I agreed to give one-fifth of the outfit and the boat to him and let him take a risk of the river, if he saw fit to do so.

On the third morning he decided to go, so we carefully divided the dried potatoes, rice and flour, no longer having any bacon; for the embalming fluid, composed of arsenic and alum, used in embalming bacon in the American packing houses had not been sufficient to preserve the meat on the long trip through the swamp. But it was a very easy matter to kill game, however, as the animals had no fear of us. A rabbit or fox, or any animal there was perfectly tame, and acted as if it had never seen a human being before, although they did fear the dogs.

The old miner loaded the boat and pushed himself out into the river again, near the point where we had landed a few days previous. Waving our hands at him, I realized it was goodbye forever. Experienced as he was in mining, I thought I was more experienced in rivers, and never would be willing to float

down a stream at the rate of from twenty to thirty miles an hour, not knowing what was ahead of me.

The next morning the rest of us had to pack the outfits along the river bank. We put about ten pounds on each dog, and each man carried from thirty to fifty pounds on his back, for half a mile; then returned for another load, our Little Compass staying by the outfit to keep away the animals until we took the last load; while at the other end we left on guard our faithful leader dog, Stub.

In this way we traveled very slowly, passing many weeks going along the banks of the river, down which our grubstaker had gone before at such a rapid rate. Day after day we looked for him, thinking that possibly his boat would be lodged in a pile of driftwood, but hoping that he had made a safe landing. After all, this would be next to impossible, and search as we might, nothing was ever seen of him.

The river wound and bent in different directions, until at last it passed through a canyon, and as we looked over its high walls into the seething torrent below and heard the roaring of the water, we realized that no creature could pass through such a place and live. I had thought Miles Canyon and

White Horse Rapids were the worst known, but there were three falls in this canyon, which made it impassable. It was then we gave up all hope of ever seeing poor old Donovan again.

Ahead, the barren mountain of black rock looked larger and nearer, and we hoped against hope to soon reach it, for life was becoming of little value to us; although through it all a sad word or a sigh was never heard from anyone but the Jew, who very often prayed in his way, remarking that life was very sweet to him; that he would be willing to do most anything if he could only be in old New York again. The little Scandinavian girl, our Compass, with her blonde hair streaming about her face, her dress torn and ragged, never uttered a complaint, but was always brightly smiling, bringing a great deal of sunshine to our party.

On and on we worked our way down the river, meeting many obstacles in the way of small creeks to cross, and steep bluffs of rock to scale. Vegetation had long since ceased, and the earth was entirely covered with iron ore. We no longer could tell the time, for the three watches in the party had stopped, and our real compass pointed directly towards the mountain.

The nights were beginning to be very cold, and although extremely tired and worn from packing our outfits, yet we were unwilling to leave anything behind, for to lose it meant to shorten our lives. While the provisions lasted there was hope, but we knew what the outcome would be when they were gone. We also realized that winter was coming on and that we could ill afford to leave any of our clothing or blankets, knowing that in that country the thermometer would fall to sixty or seventy below zero, through a certain portion of the winter.

Our shoes were worn out and discarded, and in order to keep our feet off the sharp pieces of iron ore, we had whittled out and made a kind of sandal from wood, covering the top with canvas.

Confident that we were nearing the mountain, we worked harder than ever, relaying and carrying our packs, then going back again for another load. We continued to follow the banks of the river, in hopes that it emptied into the Yukon, or ocean, yet understanding that it would have to go round the mountain, as it was running straight toward it.

Our compass showed this mountain to be directly north, and we hoped to climb it to a high elevation, and with our field-glass locate the Yukon or possibly some settlement.

CHAPTER XI.

THE IRON MOUNTAIN.

At last, late one day, our party came to the foot of the mountain, to reach which so many weary miles had been traveled and so many weary weeks spent.

All of our hopes perished; there was no indication of life anywhere near it, and the river we had followed ran into a cave in the mountain, which was over three hundred and fifty feet wide, and sixty feet high at the center of the arch.

The water was lower in the river at this point, running as fast as the water from the nozzle of a hose, but did not reach entirely across the cave, thereby forming sort of a shore on each side. Bill and I, taking candles and a rifle, went into the cave along the shore of the river, and by jumping from one boulder to another went in so far that we were compelled to light the candles.

The only things visible were boulders, water, and

overhanging walls of iron ore. The terrible roar of the river sounded as if we were going over a great fall, and there was a cloud of steam every now and then that would fill the entire cave.

At last we came to a big opening on the side of the main cave, which formed a large, arched room. Here the bank of the river was a black gravel deposit of iron ore. We had entered the cave about four hundred feet, so sat down to decide whether to return or go farther in; and while I was examining the gravel, which was all as black as coal, I saw a few sparkling pieces. On closer examination I found they were pure placer gold.

"Bill," I exclaimed, "our guide led us to the gold after all, for surely this is the richest pay gravel I ever saw."

Bill's answer was, "Let's see the brass nails in your shoes."

"No," I replied, as I passed him a nugget that would weigh more than an ounce, "put that in your hand, you can tell by weight what it is."

Gathering up some of the gravel and putting it in our pockets, we hurriedly started for the mouth of the cave. On our way back, there was a terrific gust of steam, which filled the place so that we

could not see even with the aid of the candles; and after it had lifted a little, I looked for Long Bill, but could not see him. Finally I heard a faint cry, following which I found Bill clinging to a boulder, with his body in the torrent, and the water trying to tear him away.

I made a leap, never thinking of the distance, for I know I could never have jumped it under other circumstances. As if some supernatural power had lifted me, I lighted upon the boulder to which he was clinging, and by a great deal of effort got him out of the water.

By that time the steam had cleared away, and we again started for the mouth of the cave.

As soon as Long Bill was able to talk, he exclaimed, "I have faced cannons and armies; I have been shot at in battle, but blow me if I ever before felt as if I had met death and still lived."

"Bill," I asked, "how did it happen? Did you slip?"

"My word, but I was so bloomin' excited over the gold, that, like Lot's wife, I was looking back and slipped into the water. That blasted gold is a delusion, anyway. Look at the drotted mess it has gotten us into. Our greediness for mere yellow

metal has made us all outcasts from civilization."

We were so interested in relating our experiences to Little Compass and Ike that we forgot all about the gravel and gold that was in our pockets; but when we did think of it and showed the Jew, he seemed to forget where he was. He grabbed at it as if it were diamonds, and sure enough, gold does have an appearance equal to diamonds when it is first mined and brought to daylight; but after it is kept in your pocket, or poke, overnight, it loses its glitter, which never returns, no matter what process it is put through. It is a well known saying among miners, when someone finds a big nugget, "Oh, we'll look at it in the morning, when it has lost its glitter; it wont look nearly so large then."

The glitter of gold when it is first mined is the real fascination for the miner, and this is one of the reasons he will pass his entire life seeking it. It lures him on, and buries his youth into old age, and from there into a grave all decked with gold. No worms will bother him in his icy sepulchre; no one will strew flowers on his grave; but early in the spring, before the snow leaves the ground, there is a little blue flower peeps through the snow; and each month through the summer, a new wild flower

makes its appearance, filled with an odor that excels any other flowers in the world. Even the linnaeus, the king of flowers, grows here, in this king of countries.

Nevertheless, the Jew tried to make a deal with us to buy our interest in the discovery, and just for a joke I asked him if he remembered that we were grub-staked, and that one-half of all we found would go to the man who supplied us with provisions.

He quickly reminded us that Donovan was dead, but I insisted, "Now, perhaps he is lodged in the cave somewhere and will come to light. He may even now be in there working the claim." I knew better, however, for no creature could enter the cave in that torrent of water and remain alive.

While Ike was not so jubilant after this, yet he still felt confident that he had found his fortune, and declared that he would remain there.

That night we pitched our tent. It was impossible to find a level spot the size of a tent, for the ground was entirely covered with broken rocks, too firmly imbedded in the iron ore to be removed. So we pitched our tent in this rough place, and wrapping blankets around us, fitted ourselves between the rocks in a sitting position, as it was

impossible to stretch out full length. Regardless of our discomfort, we soon fell asleep.

The next day, Long Bill, the Jew and I decided to tie a rope to each other, and see how far into this cave we could go. Little Compass, not caring to stay behind, decided to go with us. We carefully tied the rope around our waists, so if one fell into the water the rest could pull him out.

On we started—climbing from one boulder to another, and clinging to the overhanging walls of the cave, with the rushing river close at our feet; until we safely reached the beach, a large offset from the main cave.

Upon careful examination, this room proved to be formed from a deposit of frozen gravel, the only part of it which was thawed being that upon which we were standing. Now and then a boulder, or small piece of gravel, fell from the roof of the room, showing it to be gradually thawing. At first we could not account for this.

Presently we could hear a sound like a large pot of coffee about to boil over, or as if the river were emptying into a great fiery hole, causing the water to boil over and run back. Just then the entire room and cave filled with a dense steam, and we

were compelled to lie down, with our faces near the ground, in order to breathe. In about ten minutes it had cleared away, but during this time we had a fresh shower of gravel, showing that the steam caused the thawing.

Our first thought was to get out, but we stopped to fill our pockets with the gravel, which contained such an immense amount of gold, and with great effort persuaded Ike to return. He seemed to value the gold more than his life.

Reaching the outside in safety, we emptied our pockets into the goldpan and started to pan out the gold, as was the custom in other mining sections; but, to our surprise, most of the gravel stuck to the bottom, and on examining it closer we found it to be iron, magnetized. This mountain was so strongly magnetized, that it had been the attraction of our compass for many months past; and now we were puzzled to know which way we had been traveling. The attraction of the mountain was so strong that it had stopped our watches, and pieces of this ore would stick to our knife blades.

We thought we had been traveling north; but now, having learned that the real compass could

not be depended upon, where we were was more of a mystery than ever.

We continued to carefully pick the gold out of the pan, since it was useless to try to separate it from the gravel in any other way; although there were a few pebbles which did not stick to the bottom. Upon examination, these were found to be brown in color, about the size of an ordinary marble, and to weigh the same as gold, and Bill exclaimed:

"'Pon my word if this isn't the same kind of a stone that is caught in the riffles of the sluice-boxes in Dawson. It has not received a name, no assayer having yet been able to analyze it, doncherknow."

They are usually kept by the miners as pocket-pieces. Not more than a hundred had been found in Alaska, while here they were plentiful, showing that they formerly came from this country, and had probably been carried to Alaska by an active glacier, or possibly by a flood.

During our stay at this point, the fascination of the gold again lured us into the cave; and altogether we carried out two coal-oil cans of nuggets, most of which we were compelled to leave behind, much to the regret of the Jew, who was really anxious to leave a portion of the outfit in order to carry the gold.

The following morning, Bill and I tried to climb up the side of the mountain, hoping to see where we were; but found it very dangerous, as the iron ore would peel off and break and fall at the least touch, while we were never sure of our footing. The smoke of the volcano could be seen in the direction we had thought was north, but we knew it could not be anywhere near civilization, because we had never heard of it.

Our first thought was to turn back, but then our boat was lost, and to make one tight enough to pass through that swamp seemed impossible, as there was no material at hand; besides, there were memories of too many hardships, and we all agreed to meet death there, rather than to undertake to return the way we had come.

Later, we decided to make the trip around the mountain, and pulled camp.

CHAPTER XII.

NORTHERN LIGHTS.

We succeeded in reaching the opposite side after two days' hard travel.

Here the compass swung on its pivot, still pointing directly toward the mountain, proving to us that it was not the North Pole which attracted the needle of the compass, but either the magnetized iron mountain which we had discovered, or else we had passed into the area of the attraction of the compass; for, according to a theory I have always maintained, the North Pole, or attraction of the compass, covers many thousands of miles, and when once inside of that vast area, a compass is no longer true. This is one of the main reasons why explorers can never exactly locate the north pivot; for to lose the usefulness of the compass, in a survey outfit, is to lose the benefit of the entire outfit.

Being weary from the trip, we prepared our shake-downs for the night. Just as we were about to

draw our blankets over our heads and say "good night," Minnie exclaimed:

"Look! look there at the Northern Lights!"

The surrounding country was lighted for miles, and plainly in the sky could be seen the reflection of an immense lake. On both sides of this lake were ancient cities, although it was impossible to tell in which direction it was located, or what cities they were.

We had never before seen buildings like these, not even in pictures, so it could not be any place known to us. The lake was beautiful, surrounded as it was by trees and foliage. We talked about this until late at night, and once Minnie said, "I have seen that city before. I remember it well, but cannot remember where I saw it. It seems to me like a city I saw once in a dream. I have often had dreams of a peculiar, quaint city, with kings and princes—something like a fairy story, you know, and I always believed that some day my dreams would come true. Yes, that's the city. Now I remember it well."

In this manner she talked, seemingly to herself, until finally she fell asleep.

Early the following morning, we could see, at

what seemed to be a short distance, small timber, so with renewed energy we started for these woods, reaching there after nightfall. It was so dark, however, that we could not see to pitch camp. Being weary and worn, we simply huddled together like a flock of motherless chickens, and fell asleep. We awoke next morning stiff and sore, but on the whole very grateful for the shelter of the woods, which afforded us an opportunity to camp, shoot game and properly cook our food.

As it was getting late in the fall of the year, we decided first to build a good warm cabin to winter in; then I reminded them that we had three dogs, and that sleds could be built with which we might travel a great many miles, with little provisions. So we made three sleds, and prepared to start on our journey with the first snow. Not knowing which way to travel, we decided to continue in the direction of the volcano, as the smoke could be seen every now and then, and we hoped to come across some settlement of Indians; for in the Yukon country they are all friendly to white men, never having been imposed upon.

The snow came even earlier than we expected, and was so deep that the dogs could not travel.

Compelled to wait a few days, during the interval we made snowshoes and moccasins from raw furs, turning the hair side in on the moccasins, which made them very warm and comfortable.

At this stage one of our three dogs played an important part, presenting us with eight pups—again delaying our start for a few days. But we took them along, not having the heart to kill them, and while rabbits were plentiful, the mother dog could support herself and the pups with little effort, the rabbits being very tame and easily caught.

Finally we started, traveling ahead of the dogs on our snowshoes in order to beat down a trail, for the snow was about three feet deep. Long Bill, Ike and I had ropes around our shoulders, helping the dogs to pull. The animals were harnessed tandem to the sleds, which were tied together. Our Little Compass walked behind the rear sled, doing a large share of the work by guiding and keeping them on the trail; for if a heavily loaded one slewed, it usually meant an upset, and a hard task to get it righted in the deep snow.

In this manner we made about ten miles a day, for walking on snowshoes, pulling a load, is no easy job. At night, we spread the blankets and furs

beneath the shelter of some tree, and all piled in just as we had traveled during the day, pulling fur caps down over our ears. The last thing we would know or hear would be Minnie's cheerful, "Good night, boys, and pleasant dreams;" and very often our dreams were pleasant, so pleasant that when we awakened it was with sorrow, for in such straits as ours dreams were more pleasant than stern reality.

We passed weary days and cold nights, one after another, traveling in this manner.

Everything was frozen now, so no difficulty was experienced in crossing small streams and rivers. Very often we walked on the top crust of the snow, at which time our snowshoes could be discarded. At last we came to a lake about thirty miles wide.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON A FROZEN LAKE.

After traveling about five miles on the lake, Minnie was hitched up with Bill and me to help the dogs pull the outfit, Ike holding on to the sled and pushing, for he had become snow-blind. The rest of us had smeared black from the bottom of the frying-pan under our eyes, which protected them from the glare of the snow. The Jew would not do this until too late. In this condition we resembled a band of comic minstrels, although little Minnie was the only one of us who laughed. Her cheerful disposition had no equal.

We made half the distance across the lake the first day, there being but little snow on the ice, although we were now facing a terrible wind, so strong that it required a great effort to keep from being blown back.

Just ahead of us we saw what appeared to be a ridge, or rise, in the ice, which proved to be about

ten feet high. It was getting late, and the dogs seemed to understand that we were in a dangerous place in the middle of a lake, with a strong wind ahead of us. They crouched close to the ice, and with a pitiful whine, threw their shoulders tight in the collar, and made long scratches with their claws, as they worked hard with us. At last we reached the ridge of ice, which turned out to be a crack in the lake.

When a lake freezes entirely over, the expansion causes the ice to crack, and each side of the crack lifts up, but instead of that being an obstacle to us, I believe to this day that it saved our lives, for with an axe we chopped a cave in this wall, and crawled in. For three days, from our shelter, we watched the most terrific storm and blizzard ever witnessed by any of us.

With four people and three dogs, together with the pups, in this small space, there was no chance to get cold. We had no opportunity to cook, but were somewhat prepared for such an emergency, by always having cooked from three to four days' provisions before leaving camp, in case our next stopping-place proved inconvenient.

In this country it wasn't like traveling near

Dawson on the trail, where the last traveler leaves wood and kindling prepared for the next one who will pass that way. All over the Yukon country it is easy to find a camping place where some prospector has stopped before you. He will almost always leave some kindling and dry pieces of wood, ready to touch a match to, for the next passer that way; and *yet men call it an uncivilized country.* *Where else in this civilized world can you find men so friendly?*

In preparing our food for a trip, we boiled beans and put them out on the snow in a frying or baking pan, left them for a few minutes, by which time they were frozen. Striking the bottom of the pan, the beans were knocked out and broken into chunks. As soon as one panful had been frozen and broken up, we put it into a flour sack, and repeated this until the sack was full. Then, when we wanted cooked beans, all that was necessary was to reach into the flour sack, take out a few pieces of frozen beans (which resemble peanut candy), and put them in the frying-pan. Throwing in a little snow to take the place of water, we set them on the campfire, and in a few minutes had a panful of nice

cooked beans, which we nicknamed "Alaska strawberries."

The same method was used for pea-soup or dried apricots. This time, however, we were compelled to eat the beans frozen, not having the opportunity to make a fire.

We had plenty of canned corned-beef and horse meat. It was very hard to tell one from the other, the only distinguishing mark being the paper labels on the beef, for there were none on the canned horse. When the labels on the beef got wet and came off, we called it horse; because this meat, brought for the dogs, was in the same kind of cans, from the same American packing-house, looked and tasted the same when the can was open; so we decided it was all horse—but nevertheless, it was good.

The only way to quench our thirst was to melt snow in our mouths, or eat ice, and Bill would remark, "I say, isn't it a blessing to have ice to allay our thirst, for jolly well I remember when our regiment was crossing the desert in South Africa, ten men died for want of water."

So, miserable as we were in that dugout, as Bill often said, we were warm, dry and comfortable,

and could find something for which to be thankful.

The third day the storm cleared away and we made preparations to leave camp, but in looking out we found the incline too steep to get over. By cutting steps in the ice, we reached the top, where we found an opening too wide to jump across, so we lashed our three sleds together, making a bridge. By this means, with a rope tied to our bodies in case of accident, we carried our provisions and outfit across, and after several hours of hard work, we managed to get on the other side of the crack.

At once I slid down the incline, and found myself standing in three or four inches of water, which had overflowed for about fifty feet. The snow had covered it so that at first the water could not be noticed. They lowered the sleds and outfit to me, which I took across to hard ice. Then Bill held the dogs on a sled and I hauled them across. I saw there was no time to waste, for by this time the water was rising fast. Hurrying back for Minnie and the Jew, I took them over on the sled. By doing this no one but myself had wet feet.

Soon our packs were lashed to the sleds and we started for the other shore, which could be seen in the distance, and we knew it must be reached before

stopping for the night, as we would perish if we remained on the lake.

Presently my feet became so cold and numb from being wet that I could hardly walk. Finally, after a great deal of urging from Minnie and Long Bill, I climbed on the top of the load to ride. For the first time on the trip I shed a few tears, for I realized that my feet were freezing and that I would be a helpless creature, and it would be far better to have met death than to be left in this plight.

Just then I heard one of the pups howling in the box which was lashed on top of the load, and in my irritable condition, caused by suffering and pain, I wondered why we were so foolish as to pull a box of pups that would never be of any use to us. Suddenly a new thought came to me, and I put both feet in the box with the pups. At first they drew away from me, but soon nestled down, and I could feel the warmth of their little bodies penetrating through my wet moccasins. It was then that I knew why we had brought the pups. How grateful I felt towards them, for they had saved my feet. As it was, I afterwards lost my nails, and the skin peeled off.

In less than twenty minutes I was off the sled

again, with my feet warm, pulling with the rest of them.

We crossed the lake with no further difficulty, and to our joy and delight the opposite shore was covered with thick timber, where we camped for three days. Here we pitched our six by eight sleeping tent, which we were not able to use except in the woods, for if it should once get wet and covered with ice it could not be folded to take with us.

CHAPTER XIV.

ENCOUNTER WITH A WOLVERINE.

All felt happier now, even the dogs, excepting our third one, which was a white, short-haired bulldog, remarkable for his strength. He was all right while working, but he would set up a howl from the cold as soon as we stopped, which started the others. We would put an old fur over his back and light a candle, sticking it in the snow in front of him. This small blaze would keep him quiet until our fire was started, then I usually had to blow out the candle in order to get him to change his position.

This bull-dog caused a great deal of merriment and laughter in our party. He had a small crooked tail, which froze off an inch at a time, keeping it constantly sore; but he was bound to sit down on it, which of course hurt him very much, and kept him in a bad humor. He imagined either we, or the dogs, were hurting him. It took every effort to keep him from fighting Stub, our leader.

On this occasion, we had spent half an hour thawing snow for water to make tea, when the bulldog saw an opportunity, and seizing Stub by the throat, hung on with a vengeance. We tried to choke him off, but could not; then pinched his sore tail, but with no results. Seeing that something had to be done, and done quickly or we would lose our faithful leader, I seized the much-prized hot water and let the bulldog have it in the face. It brought him to, and he let go. Poor Stub's neck was very sore, but he managed to get in his work, for he left the bulldog on three legs.

After the dogs had had their supper, which consisted of corn-meal mush, flavored with spoiled bacon, they settled themselves for the night, while we crawled into our little tent, where we had made a brush bed, and I drew my combination rifle and shot-gun close by me.

There is one thing that I will give that country credit for—it never causes people to spend sleepless nights. I was soon dreaming that we were carrying the oil-cans full of nuggets down Broadway in New York, hunting a place to sell them, when suddenly a slight noise awakened me. There was a full moon, and as I looked down at my feet,

I saw a sight that I never will forget—the head of a wolverine, the most dangerous animal in all of Alaska. He was licking out the frying-pan, where we had warmed up some canned horse.

A wolverine is an animal that will fight when he is frightened, instead of running, and I knew better than to move or make any sound. My first thought was my gun, but how to get action on a desperate animal like that at so close a range I could not at first decide. However, moving my hand as slowly as I could without making a bit of sound, I carefully lifted the gun, until it rested on my toes. The wolverine was within twenty inches of our feet and when I got range on him I let go both barrels, and I surely got my game.

The report of the gun frightened Long Bill so that he stood erect, with such force that he lifted our shelter from us bodily, he being much taller than the tent.

"Blow me," he said, "but that's shocking, doncherknow. Drot it, what did you do that for?"

"Oh," I replied, "I was shooting a little game for breakfast."

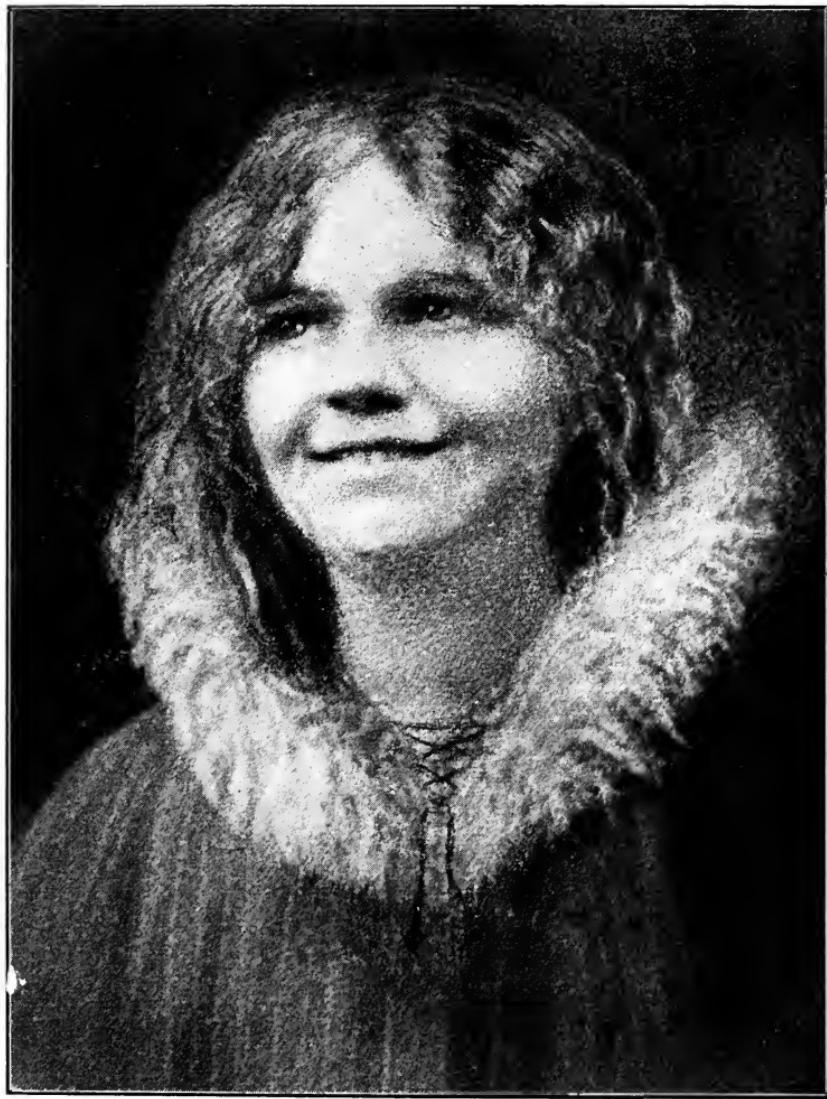
"Blast it, Professor, take the bloomin' tent off my head. I can't see a thing, doncherknow."

"My word," continued Bill, "but can't a chap dream fast? I thought I was in South Africa fighting Kaffirs, and that one had just shot me with a cannon."

After the excitement was over, we settled down and were soon peacefully sleeping again. The next morning we skinned the wolverine, and the dogs had a much needed feast.

A wolverine is a cross between a wolf and a bear; its front paws and head are the same as a bear; its hind feet are like a wolf's; its bushy tail and marked back like an ant-eater's. The skin was a great addition to our supply of furs.

On the fourth morning we packed again and started on. After the three days' rest and feast we were like new, for life out-of-doors gives one plenty of appetite and muscle, and we had been next to nature so long that each day we were prepared for the worst. Long Bill used to say, "Never mind today, Professor, it will be worse tomorrow."



OUR BLONDE ESKIMO

CHAPTER XV.

THE GREAT GLACIER.

So on and on we went through scrubby woods for two weeks, until we came to another lake about five miles wide, on the other side of which there seemed to be a very high mountain. It looked like a glacier, which we afterwards found it to be. It seemed impossible to pass over it, so at first we decided to remain in the woods until we died; but Little Compass encouraged us to keep on, with the assurance that there was a bright future ahead. To remain was sure death from starvation, but to press on, there was a possibility and hope; and it required only a few words of encouragement to start us on again.

There was no snow on the lake, and it was easy traveling on the ice. After crossing it, we found a solid wall of ice about twenty-five feet high, as if the glacier had traveled into the lake, and broken off square. The face of this glacier was

different from anything I had ever seen, for it was formed in layers, about one-half inch thick. Between each layer there was a streak of black, resembling soot.

Try as we might, we could find no place to get on the glacier, so as to continue our course toward the volcano. We still had some hope of finding a settlement of Indians, or some trapper who could direct us on our course; besides, our Little Compass still urged us to keep on in the direction of the volcano, saying that when we reached it, which she felt sure we would, our hardships would be at an end.

"Minnie, why do you feel so positive that the direction we are taking is the right one?" I asked.

With her sweet, winning smile, she answered *with that ever-famous woman's reason, "Because."*

At last we decided to cut a sloping tunnel into the side of the glacier, with our axes, hoping to reach the top; and as we cut our way through this ice, the entire formation was found to be in layers.

It took us day and night for three days to reach the top, and we used the mouth of the tunnel for shelter during this time. At times we wondered if we were trying to get on the glacier, or simply

finding something to do to keep from going mad.

As we were struggling our way through this ice, I felt like a prisoner fighting for freedom; and with new vigor and energy would sink my axe into the ice and bring out larger chunks than ever, until great drops of sweat would stand on my brow. despite my being in an ice cave.

Finally it came my turn to rest, Long Bill taking my shift at the axe. As I was losing myself in sleep, like distant chimes the blows from the axe seemed farther and farther and farther away, as if it were all a dream. At last I knew no more, falling into a deep sleep from exhaustion.

Once or twice during the night I awoke, and could not remember where I was, until I recognized the sound of chopping ice; for it seemed as if Bill never tired, as he struck one blow after another. Finally, early on the fourth morning, I heard him tugging at something.

"Bill, what's the matter now?" I asked.

"I've lost my bloomin' axe through the hole. Blast me if I don't believe I've struck top instead of bottom."

Climbing up, I found that Bill was right; he had really struck daylight, and lost his axe through the opening.

After breakfast, we all went up the tunnel, and clambering through the opening, stood on top of the glacier, gazing back across the lake. Looking in the opposite direction toward the volcano, our hopes sank, for the glacier seemed to slope upward, preventing our seeing any great distance. No smoke was visible, making it impossible for us to locate the volcano, or to determine the direction in which it lay.

At this Ike actually laid down and refused to go farther, and cried and prayed that we might return to the opposite side of the lake. I asked him, "To whom are you praying? To Father Moses?" And to aggravate him so as to work up his fighting blood, *I declared that Moses was not a Jew, and was not the son of the servant of Pharaoh's daughter; but was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, who was an Egyptian; that it had simply been policy to blame the servant.* This fairly made him boil with rage, and forgot his fear.

Then Long Bill stood erect and related the story of Napoleon crossing the Alps: how his soldiers faltered, fell and clung to his garments, pleading with him to return; how, heeding them not, he

pressed on to victory and did the things which seemed to the world impossible; and to this day, Napoleon ranks highest in accomplishment.

Bill stood there in the real attitude of Napoleon, though instead of being garbed in the uniform of a soldier, he was draped in an old red blanket, like an Indian chief, and as he repeated this story we forgot the cold. Our hearts filled with the determination to press on, even if it lead to death, for we expected to die anyway, *so why not die trying to live, even in the face of death?*

Nevertheless, the Jew did not appreciate sentiment, and still timidly suggested a return to the woods; however, we told him if he went he would go alone, so he decided to follow us.

Just then Minnie exclaimed, "Look, look, there is the smoke now!" and sure enough, great rolls and clouds of smoke raised toward the heavens, settling again out of sight behind the summit of the glacier.

I grasped my compass and marked the course, for fear we could not see smoke often enough to keep in the right direction, although I realized the compass was not true, as it would continue to point towards the magnetized iron mountain which we had passed. Regardless of this, I could mark my

course. So we packed our outfits ready to travel again, knowing there was a long, hard trip before us, which perhaps would be our last, but Long Bill said,

"Cheer up, while there's life there's hope," one of his favorite sayings, and little Minnie added, "While I am guardian and 'Compass' no harm will come to us." Although I thought that down deep in her heart she had but little hope; for I knew I had none, but did not speak of it to the others, for fear of discouraging them.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FATAL CREVICE.

Anticipating the tedious trip across the glacier, we prepared—as we supposed—a generous supply of meat. A caribou, shot in the woods before crossing the lake, seemed sufficient meat for ourselves and the dogs.

Fastening on our creepers, a kind of spiked sole for walking on ice, we started on a trip that we might never finish. At night, we would put down the robes and blankets and pile in, not knowing whether we would ever awake again. The glacier was constantly moving, causing a continual roaring and crackling of the ice.

On the fourth day after we had started, there was a heavy snow, which made our traveling very difficult; for there were very often deep crevices in the ice, calling for much watchfulness and care.

Reaching what proved to be the widest crevice on the glacier, about six feet across, we decided to

lash our sleds together and make a bridge, just as we had done on the lake; but Ike said this was nonsense and declared he could jump it. Just as we were about to complete our bridge, to our surprise and horror he made a leap; but fell short of the other side, and disappeared in the crevice. Down and down he went out of sight. We could hear his mournful groans, but could not see him. Minnie wrung her hands, and Bill exclaimed, "My word, Professor, what will we do?"

I volunteered to be lowered into the crevice, although Bill and Minnie both declared it was useless, and tried to persuade me not to go. But in my excitement I insisted; so, tying together all the ropes we had left, making in all about sixty feet, we made fast one end to our bridge, and the other end of the rope was tied around my waist. Bill and Minnie lowered me about forty feet into the opening, to see if I could rescue Ike—and never in my life did I endure such suffering from the bitter cold.

Not only this, but when I was lowered the full length of the rope, I saw our companion far beneath me, wedged so tightly in the ice that it would have been utterly impossible to have helped him out, even if I could have reached him. As it was, I was

only half way to him; more than that, the action of the glacier was closing the crevice, and realizing my own danger, I shouted,

“Hoist me quick, or it will be too late!”

Then I called again to poor Ike, but received no answer, only hearing a faint groan, which told me that nothing could be done for him; and my only thought was that he might freeze before he was crushed to death, in that way being spared further suffering.

As they were pulling me to the top, suddenly there was a slip, and the rope seemed to give way. Oh, the horror of it! To feel myself falling and to know that mine was to be the same fate as my companion's below! Then, no sooner had I given up my hope of life, than the rope, with a jerk, became tight. It was then I remembered that I had made it fast to the sleds across the crevice, but could it be possible that they did not have the strength to pull me out? I knew it would be impossible for me to climb the rope, as my hands and arms were numb with cold.

Was there nothing left for me but to dangle in this crevice, until the crack in the glacier closed and crushed my bones in an icy grave? Perhaps

I would freeze before this would happen—or would I bring it all to a sudden end? I clutched for my belt-axe, to cut the rope and let my body drop into the depths below, for what was the use of struggling for life when the end seemed so near? But I found the axe fast between the rope and my body, and could not get it.

I exclaimed aloud, "Fate is against me, I must suffer!" when just then I heard Bill's voice as though far, far away, for I was becoming numb with cold, and was beginning to be drowsy:

"Keep up your courage, old chap, and we'll soon have you out!"

After what seemed hours to me, in my frozen condition, but in reality was only a few moments, the rope began to move upward, and at last I was landed on the top of the glacier; where Bill and Minnie put blankets around me, and pounded and rolled me for nearly half an hour, before there was sufficient circulation of blood in my body to enable me to stand. When I was able to stand on my feet, Bill and Minnie hugged me and kissed my bearded face. Then I was glad that I lived, for I saw that both depended upon me.

As soon as I was able to speak, I asked, "What happened to the rope, Bill?"

But it was little Minnie who answered, "It was my fault. One of my creepers slipped off, causing me to fall; and if I had not brought up against Bill's foot, solidly planted on the ice, I would have joined you in the crevice below."

"Yes," continued Bill, "and no telling what would have happened if the rope had not been tied to the sleds and put across the crevice, for when Minnie lost her grip, blow me if I was able to hold it alone with my mitts on. We both pulled off our bloomin' mitts at once, and took hold of the frozen rope with our bare hands, and—here you are."

Dear little Minnie! When I looked at her pale face and bleeding hands, I began to realize what she had passed through. Although she smiled at me brightly, at the same time a tear trickled down her cheek, which made me think that after all she was still fond of me.

It was getting late. Being worn out, we decided to rest there for the night; so, after crossing the crevice, which by this time had almost closed, we fed the dogs and swallowed what food we could, and camped for the night.

At dawn, which at that season was ten o'clock,

we were astir, and after eating breakfast, started on; but not without a sad thought for our lost companion, Long Bill remarking,

"'Pon my word, I suppose we'll all go that way, one by one, doncherknow."

"Yes, Bill, we all expect to die; but after all, *the greatest surprise in a man's life is when death overtakes him.*"

We knew not what fate held in store for us; but kept pushing on, expecting each night to freeze to death. Before we fell asleep, we bade each other goodbye instead of goodnight; for as we advanced farther on the glacier, it grew colder, and our only wonder was, which one of us would be the first to go. In spite of this, Minnie still smiled, until finally I asked:

"Minnie, how can you constantly smile and feel so cheerful in the face of such hardship and sorrow as ours?"

She would smile and reply, "It may be hardship and sorrow to you, but to me it is a task of pleasure, for I feel that ahead of me is a bright future that I simply have to struggle to win."

"How do you know this, Minnie?"

"I cannot explain it to you, for you would not understand."

Losing my temper, I exclaimed, "Are you spirit or flesh? Or are you losing your mind? At times you alarm me with your weird remarks and insinuations that you are a reincarnated being simply returning to your home."

As she took my hand, she said, "My dear, this subject is too deep for you and we had better not talk about it. Look! there is the North Star, yet it is not north of us."

Bill gave me a wink and shook his head, so I dropped the subject.

Bill and I had long since given up all hope of life, and it made but little difference whether death came today or tomorrow; but in spite of this, we tied a rope to each other as we traveled, so that we at least would escape the fate of the Jew.

CHAPTER XVII.

CROSSING THE GLACIER.

On and on we went. One night as we were trying to sleep, wrapped in our blankets and fur robes, with the dogs huddled under the sleds, hour after hour I could hear little Minnie groan and shake and chatter with the cold, for that night it must have been seventy below zero.

At last Minnie said, "I cannot live. I am slowly freezing to death. If such a thing should happen that you ever get word to my brother, tell him I died happy, although my body was very miserable; and continue in the direction of the volcano, for in my heart something tells me that this is the right course."

Her courageous words, while at the point of death, filled me with despair, for to lose my Little Compass, the joy and sunshine, the only ray of hope left in my life, seemed more than I could bear.

Necessity sharpened my wits, however, and I said,

"You shall *not* freeze!"

So I worked my hand from beneath the blankets and reached under the sled, where I knew my ever-faithful leader dog lay. He was a long-haired, mixed spaniel and collie. I forced him out from under the sled, and although he knew whose hand it was, he nibbled on me hard enough to bring the blood; because even the dog realized the danger of being taken from the little shelter he had. I pulled him down in the robes and held him there; in a short time our bed was comfortably warm, for in a cold climate there is no warmth like the heat of a dog's body.

Little Minnie never ceased praising and loving that dog, often remarking that she owed her life to her faithful Stub, and thereafter she bestowed all her affections on him. Again I could see that the hardships through which she was passing day by day were killing all the love she had, or might have had, for me. However, it made but little difference now, for I was sure that we would all die on that glacier.

At this time of the year the days were very short, and it became quite dark at four o'clock in the afternoon. For that reason we could travel

no great distance in a day. An occasional gust of smoke from the volcano kept us on the right course, and was our only ray of hope.

We had now been on the glacier about seven days, and our provisions were running low, for the pups were eating almost as much as an ordinary dog. As they had proven of so much value in saving my feet from freezing I would not kill them. Besides this, since we had learned how much warmth they could furnish, we put them in our bunks at night.

We often wondered why we were trying to live, when seemingly there was no hope before us, except the smoke of the volcano, which could be seen more plainly every day.

On looking over our food supply, we found barely enough to last three days. Already we had skimped ourselves and the dogs.

That day a flock of wild geese flew directly over us. Long Bill grabbed the gun and shot both barrels, never dreaming he could reach them (they were very high), but to our surprise the rifle bullet did get one of them, and it fell close by us. We had no fire or opportunity to cook it, so you can imagine our hungry condition when we ate that goose absolutely raw. Upon opening it, we found

grains of wheat in the craw as large as grains of corn. Now we were sure this flock of geese came from the direction of the volcano, and it seemed hardly possible that wheat grew in other than a civilized country. Besides, where could grain that size grow if not in a very warm climate? It was but slightly swollen, and could not have been eaten by the goose more than an hour before.

At once new hope arose in our hearts, and we harnessed up our dogs and "mushed" on. We were in a condition where we seemed to be grasping for life, for, like a drowning man clutching at a straw, we grasped at the hope which this grain of wheat gave us, knowing that land could not be far off.

We pressed on and on, and it became colder as we traveled higher towards the summit of the glacier. Before reaching this elevation, we noticed that the smoke of the volcano constantly hovered on the highest point, and the air was stagnant, at times making us drowsy. As we neared the top, the ice looked black and was covered with soot.

While in camp, before starting to cross the glacier, we had made several pairs of good moccasins from bearskins and the hide of the wolverine, and had it not been for these furs we never would have

been able to exist.

Being entirely out of provisions, we were weak from hunger and could scarcely walk. The bulldog was so lame that he had to be hauled on the sled. After a long talk, we decided to kill the dog; because it was useless in our weakened condition to waste our strength pulling him when he would have to die sooner or later—as seemed to be the fate awaiting all of us.

Bill and I tried to forget our hunger and at times refused to eat, in order that Minnie might have more. After killing the dog we concluded that dog-meat was about as good as horse-meat, so we skinned him and kept the carcass. After dark, we pulled off little strips of the lean flesh, and I helped to eat my bulldog, forcing myself to forget what kind of meat it was. Though this may seem a hard thing to you, reader, to me it was easy; for after a human being has passed through such suffering and hardships, his senses are less acute. He has a big appetite, with little or no taste, and in time becomes much like a savage. The dog supplied us with nourishment for two days.

That night we noticed a heavy fog over our heads, which began to settle and condense, forming

great drops of rain. The weather turned warm, making us most uncomfortable in our furs — in fact, it seemed like summer. Our clothes were becoming damp, and at last we realized that if we should get wet, and the weather turn cold again, we would surely freeze to death, so we pitched our tent between the sleds.

This half fog and half rain continued all night and settled on our little tent and froze, until it was heavily weighted down.

The next day when the fog lifted, there were nearly two inches of newly formed ice on the glacier. The sleds were frozen so firmly that we had to cut them loose, while our little tent had to be abandoned, because it was a solid mass of ice, and there was no possible way to carry it with us in that condition.

This new layer of ice was very clear, and when we chopped our sleds out we could see the old ice, which was much darker than the new formation, with the black streak of soot between. Now we could understand exactly how the glacier was formed in layers, and it was quite plain why the black streaks could be seen between them; for we had observed on the previous day that the smoke

of the volcano had settled on the summit of the glacier, the point we had at last reached.

After the mist was lifted, the atmosphere was clearer than it had ever been before. Ahead of us, in the distance, could be seen a small growth of stunted trees, such as usually grow above the timber line on a mountain. Now we were sure, that unless some accident befell us, we would get off the glacier.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TRAIL OF THE WOLVES.

At last we reached the trees that we had seen in the distance, and Bill shouted, "Klondike! we have found land again!" The scrubby trees proved to be spruce, and looked more like a bush than a tree, with little or no foliage. This we knew must be due to the smoke of the volcano.

We still had our snowshoes and put them on, beating down a trail for the dogs for about two miles; when suddenly, in plain view, we saw the blaze shooting from the mouth of the volcano, which was on a level with us. The mountain gradually sloped down from where we were, although our sleds would not coast, because the snow was so deep and the runners of the sleds were narrow.

Being very tired and hungry, we camped early, in a little grove of small spruce trees. About dusk, we heard a noise that sounded like a flock of quail a short distance from us, which Long Bill imme-

diately recognized as Alaska ptarmigan. He hastily caught up the gun, and fired wildly in the direction of the sound, and with two shots brought down four of them.

Stripping some of the dry bark and limbs from the trees, we started a fire, and for the first time in weeks had a pot of coffee, and having boiled the ptarmigan in the frying pan, we had a feast fit for a king. Coffee, tea and salt being the only provisions we had left, we would now have to depend entirely on the game we could shoot.

Next morning Bill went back to the place where he shot the ptarmigan, and found five more that he had killed, but did not find the previous night on account of the darkness. After enjoying the second meal of ptarmigan, we pulled camp and started on down the mountain in the direction of the volcano.

We had only gone a short distance when we came to a beaten trail, now and then, to our astonishment, seeing drops of blood on the snow. On examining the trail closely, we saw tracks of a caribou and a band of wolves. At first we decided to go in another direction, for fear of meeting them. Again we remembered that if wolves were on the track of

a caribou, by that time they had killed it and satisfied their hunger, and as the trail led in the direction we wished to go, we followed on down the mountain.

When a band of wolves take after a caribou they usually get him, for they follow close at his heels, and at each opportunity bite his hocks, or hind legs, near the hoof, until they so cripple him that he is not able to travel. When his hindquarters become helpless, they gradually climb on him from the rear, until they manage to get him down entirely. Sometimes wolves will follow a caribou in this manner twenty miles before they succeed in killing him, and they leave a beaten trail in the snow, hard enough for anyone to travel on. The only place a caribou can be successfully attacked is while he is in the deep snow.

Pretty soon the dogs began sniffing and the pups to whine, so we knew we must be close to the end of the trail, and that the dogs scented the blood of the caribou. We found the prey exactly in the condition we had imagined, except that three good-sized grey wolves were still feeding on the caribou. Bill lowered his rifle and put an end to one of them—the other two fled.

So we pitched camp by the side of the dead

caribou, and cut off the choice pieces of meat for ourselves, then turned the dogs loose on the rest of it. Next morning the pups looked like tadpoles, being mostly stomach and eyes. This was a timely treat for the dogs—for they surely did need something to eat.

For four days we traveled down this mountain, until we came to the summit of a lower one, and never will I forget the sight I saw through the field-glass: a steaming lake, like a great pond of hot water, which, even with my glass, I was not able to see across. Beside it was a beautiful valley, extending for miles and miles, far beyond my range of vision. There seemed to be towns and settlements, and farms with fences, and now in reality I saw the big lake and buildings which were shown to us in the Northern Lights.

Poor Bill jumped and shouted and whooped with glee, and Minnie exclaimed, "I knew it, I knew it! I knew we would find this place. It has been pictured to me in dreams all my life."

"I wonder if the rest of your dream will come true?" I asked, to which she answered, "Never fear, Professor, the rest of my dream is too good to come true."

We reasoned that this lake surely must be an inlet from the sea, and that what seemed to be steam was rising fog; but these cities—where could they be—where were we? All we had seen for months was glacier and snow, and to suddenly see green trees and fields was almost more than we could bear. I did not shout or jump with glee, but leaned against my sled and said slowly:

"Bill, tell me if you can see the same things that I see through the glass. Can you see a vast lake, covered with mist? A city with a big tower in the center? And all the green fields, and evidences of a beautiful civilization? Bill, tell me, is it a mirage—or am I losing my mind?"

"No, Professor, blast my eyes if I can't see all you mention; but blow me if I know where we are. I can see the big tower of stone on this side of the lake in the center of the city, doncherknow. Minnie, look again."

Little Minnie took the glass, scanning the scene. Then we all looked again and again; the view did not change, so we began to hope that our sufferings were soon to end.

We decided to camp where we were that night, and the next day to go on.

"Professor," said Bill, "blow me if I don't believe it is the domicile of an order of monks, secluded from the rest of the world."

"Oh no, Bill," said Minnie, "this city is not new to me, although I do not know just where it lies. It seems to me as if I had only been away from it on a visit, and lost my way home."

"It's a bloomin' pity you didn't remember the trail. It might have saved us a deucedly hard jolt, doncherknow."

CHAPTER XIX.

REALITY OF A DREAM.

As we sat there by the camp-fire after our meal, all was darkness, except the little blaze of the fire before us. Suddenly the heavens lighted and we heard a sound like the roaring from the stack of a blast-furnace. Looking toward the volcano, the blaze could be seen leaping high into the air. Minnie stood erect, facing the volcano with outstretched arms, exclaiming,

“Beautiful, beautiful! Thou art surely my friend, for thy smoke has led me to my life’s dream.”

As I looked at her while she uttered these words, her cheeks aglow, her figure so nobly erect, I wondered if she were some superhuman being, who had charmed us out of our course simply to attain her ambition. But these thoughts had no sooner occurred to me than I exclaimed aloud,

“No, no, it cannot be true. This is surely the little Swedish girl whom I met in the canyon.”

Then hurrying to her side, I attempted to take her in my arms, but she waved me away, asking me if I could not see more beauty in nature than I could in her love.

"Yes, dear, but I am jealous of nature, for the nature you are now gazing upon seems to win your love from me."

Just then Bill interrupted with, "Come, come, quit your quarreling, and let's go to bed. Don't accuse Minnie of not loving you, Professor, for I know she does. Blow me if she hasn't proven it in every respect."

Acting upon Bill's suggestion, I returned to the camp-fire and sat down on the ground. Drawing my knees up, I stared at the little blaze in deep thought, for I could feel within me that my time had been wasted, following a fanciful vision. After all, she treated me kindly only for the service I could render her.

Minnie continued to stand and gaze in the direction of the volcano, although the blaze had died down and all was darkness now. When she returned to the camp-fire, she sat down close by me, and slipped her hand in mine, saying, "Look up, dearie, and be happy, for as Bill says, 'Never mind

today, it will be worse tomorrow.' "

I did look up at her, and by the dim light of the camp-fire carefully scrutinized her, and in spite of long suffering and exposure to the elements, her face was marvelously beautiful. I thought of the story of "Beauty and the Beast," placing myself as Beast; for I surely resembled one, dressed completely in furs, with long hair and beard. How could I expect a beautiful woman to see anything in me to love? So I smiled at her, saying, "I will cheer up, Minnie, and try to remain so to the end of our journey."

There was but little sleep for me that night, for along with the aches and pains of my body, my heart ached, too; for I had never loved but once in my life, and something within told me that I could not retain this love—that she was not satisfied with me. She seemed more spiritual than human, as no human being could have stood the exposure and hardships this girl had suffered, and still have the appearance of a stately queen.

The following morning I shot an ibex, a species of goat or sheep, which never goes below the snow line, but feeds on twigs and grasses, growing behind the shelter of rocks. It was standing on a cliff

about fifty or sixty feet above us. Wounded, it jumped, landing on all fours in a snowdrift on a level with us, and only a few feet away. We soon had it skinned and cut up into quarters, then, building a fire of birch bark and spruce limbs, we roasted pieces of ibex ; and like Indians, feasted all that day, until we had practically devoured the animal.

In the distance we could see another mountain, covered with a grove of small spruce trees, from eight to fifteen feet in height. Evidently it was as high as the one we were on. Between the two mountains was a broad valley which we must cross. The crust on the snow was sufficiently hard to hold us up, but we dared not coast, on account of the trees and underbrush. Our effort now was not to pull the sleds, but to hold them from going too fast. We were again obliged to put our creepers on.

The farther we went down the mountain, the rougher the crust became. The steam, or rain, encountered by us on the glacier, most likely had caused this crust on the snow. Though it was very hobbly, yet it was as smooth as glass. After a while it became necessary to tie a rope to our sleds and wind it around a tree and lower the sleds, lodging them behind another tree, then to creep down to

where they were lodged. In this way we traveled down the mountain.

The dogs were not in harness during this descent, and devoted their time to catching rabbits, which they enjoyed, but we could not bring ourselves to eat them, because they were full of worms, and had sore necks. All rabbits in Alaska get in this condition once in five years.

The second day we reached the center of the valley, where we found a river, about two hundred feet in width. It looked to be frozen over, until we were half way across, where we found an opening and a swift-running stream of water, which we could not understand, for in this latitude, at this time of year, running water was unheard of.

At last we found a place apparently frozen solid all the way across, but nevertheless as we walked out on the ice it gave down with our weight. Minnie, seeing her feet were about to get wet, jumped on top of the load. I saw the ice was giving way under me, so I let out a yell to the dogs.

Well knowing its meaning, they began to whine, and I know that unless one has had experience with a dog-team, he cannot realize how much a dog can pull when he has to. They crouched down close to

the ice, running their claws into it like a cat, and with a pitiful whine they surely did pull, and did it in a hurry. Even a dog knows what it means to get his feet wet on ice, but with all of our effort, it broke through as we neared the shore. The sled carrying Minnie upset. Landing on a cake of ice in the river, in the attitude of the "Count of Monte Cristo," she shouted,

"Go on, I can swim ashore! Don't stop the load in the water!"

Here the river was shallow, being about eighteen inches deep, so, obeying her order, we rushed for the shore.

In the meantime Minnie was being slowly carried down stream on the floating ice. So far she was quite dry, and I waded out to her rescue, carrying her ashore on my back. We soon had a good fire and were drying our fur suits. Dressed as we were entirely in furs, we resembled modern Robinson Crusoes.

Long Bill, taking off his boots, which were made of moose skin, with hair side in, put them by the fire to dry. Pretty soon we heard one of the pups chewing on something behind a sled. Bill said to me, "See what that blasted pup is chewing on."

I did, only to find he had stolen one of Bill's boots and eaten the entire foot off of it. We had with us so many of these raw furs that it kept us busy watching the pups, to keep them from eating our clothes and bedding.

The rest of the day was spent in drying our furs and making a new boot for Bill; but as he had been in the habit of wearing odd ones, he felt quite at home with one moose skin and one wolf skin boot.

CHAPTER XX.

BY THE LIGHT OF THE LAKE.

In the morning we prepared to ascend the mountain. The crust on this side was not so hard, and very often we would break through into three or four feet of snow. All the way up we labored through just such difficulty as this. In fact, the weather began moderating as if we were traveling into a warmer climate. At last the crust became so soft that we were compelled to use our snowshoes, and by lashing sticks on both sides of the sleds, we pushed them ahead of us, in this way keeping them from going through the crust.

It was night when we reached the summit of the lower mountain; but we had our reward, for just then the flames from the crater shot high into the air, lighting the country for miles and miles around, then died down again.

I had ceased to be surprised at anything, expecting each hour to look upon sights never seen before by civilized man.

The steaming lake, upon which we had gazed in such wonder three days before, through our field-glasses from the high mountain, could now be seen almost as distinctly as by daylight. The entire water was alight; the waves were phosphorescent, giving it an appearance of molten metal. This threw a bright light, and again we could dimly see the quaint city and the high tower.

Here we camped for the night, and as we laid our heads down to rest we no longer bade each other goodbye, but simply, "Goodnight, and pleasant dreams."

Along in the night I was awakened by a slight sound, as if two people were holding a conversation. On opening my eyes, I saw the form of Minnie, standing erect, with her hands outstretched towards the lake, saying, "Beautiful lake of fire, give me your secrets, and show me the love of my life, whom I have sought for so many years. I have suffered much and endured much, but again thou hast given me strength to come. I will soon be with thee."

Her manner alarmed me, and I decided that she was either losing her mind, or was some super-

natural being, who in time might steal upon us in the night and kill us, thinking herself a great queen, and through with our services.

Calling to her, I said, "Come, dear, lie down. I am afraid this hard trip has been too much for you, and you had better rest until morning, when we can resume our journey; for it is a long way to the lake yet. If you expect to meet your sweetheart there, you must rest, so that you can retain your beauty and attraction."

She turned and looked at me in a wise way, then came over and sat down, exclaiming, "This may all be a foolish, fanciful dream, and after all, perhaps you are the man whom I love; for, dearie, I do like you very much, and so far you have been all in all to me; though I believe somewhere beyond this—yet perhaps not in this country—there awaits the man of my dreams. I will know him when I seen him."

"Well, Minnie," I replied, "when I met you I thought that you were the girl of my dreams. Do you think that my dream has deceived me?"

She left the question unanswered, and soon fell asleep, but there was little rest for me, so I watched for the blaze from the volcano, which now

and then would belch forth tongues of fire, and die away as quickly as it came.

The next day we pressed on with new hope and vigor, for even if we had to be in this country the remainder of our lives and die here separated from the rest of the world, we knew that we had seen a sight that no other man in our country had ever seen or even heard of, and there was some satisfaction in discovery.

The snow was not so deep now, and in places the ground was bare. What puzzled us most was how the weather could be moderating at this time of the year, when we were somewhere in the Arctic region; yet it surely was, for we were becoming uncomfortably warm in our furs, and it could not be later than the middle of January. Little Minnie had kept close track of the days, weeks and months.

In the morning we wound our way down the hill, which was more of a gradual slope than the mountains we had passed over. Our field-glass was a very strong one, and enabled us to see small objects many, many miles away; but the most prominent one was the immense tower, which resembled a castle about ten or twelve stories high, and appeared to be built of stone.

About three o'clock we located a good camping place, and cut some of the small spruce trees to build a kind of Indian tepee, for we took shelter when we could get it.

Bill and I were not satisfied with the view we had of the "Lake of Fire," as we called it; so decided to go around on the opposite side of a rocky bluff near by, in order to climb up and get a better view—Bill taking the combination gun, in case we might scare up some game. He, being much longer legged than I, was some distance in the lead; when suddenly, from a small cave in the rock, I heard a familiar growl, which I very quickly recognized. The only thing for me to do was to pick out a small tree and "get there," which I did, without wasting time.

From my elevated position I saw a bear as large as a small sized cow. He must have been a cross between a grizzly and a polar, for he was white and black, marked the same as a horse or cow, and although I was interested in this animal I would much rather not have met him. The tree I went up was too small for the bear to climb, but with vigorous efforts he tried to shake me out. I yelled for Bill and told him my trouble.

"I'll be there in a minute, Professor," he answered, but Bill's minutes seemed very long, for every time that tree swayed back and forth I expected it to be torn out by the roots. I knew if Bill had forsaken me now, it would be the first time that he had hesitated in time of danger, although we had never met a bear before. But my fears were needless. One faithful shot from Bill's rifle, coming as it did from an entirely opposite and unexpected direction, ended the bear's career.

Sliding out of the tree, I asked Bill why he was so long in coming, to which he replied, "I did not want to shoot at the bloomin' animal until I could catch him in the right spot, for to wound a grizzly and not kill it is committing suicide, doncher-know, for a lead-torn bear will surely get you."

We went back for a sled and hauled the fellow to camp, where we skinned him, and I know if I had that pelt in the United States it would never be credited as genuine. This bear supplied us all with a big feast, and was appreciated, not only by us, but by the dogs.

With two days' more travel we were entirely out of the snow, but the moss was sufficiently slippery to pull our sleds down the mountain. Here we

met with a new difficulty, unthought of before. For the first time we had no water, and began to feel very thirsty. At last we became so desperate that I dug under the moss, hoping to find ice. Sure enough I did; and building a fire, we melted some in the frying pan, each taking a drink.

We had no more than swallowed it before we threw it up, so took another drink; but it had the same effect. We had noticed that the ice was yellow from running through the moss, but had not thought of it being poison. So, congratulating ourselves that we had escaped what might have been our finish, we hurried on down the mountain, still looking for water, but without success.

However, we stopped to cook some bear meat, and noticed one of the dogs digging behind a rock. At last we went to see what he was after, and found a nice big snowdrift in between two rocks. So, melting the snow, we satisfied our thirst.

CHAPTER XXI.

ENTERING A NEW FOUND COUNTRY.

As we were finishing our meal, the dogs began to growl, then set up a terrible barking, which was unusual. They were used to coming in contact with all kinds of game, but never caused such an alarm as this before. Catching up the rifle, I prepared for the worst, but imagine our astonishment when there appeared through the bushes two large, raw-boned men—the largest I had ever seen—and walked up to the fire. They appeared very friendly and looked upon us in pity, for indeed we must have been a sorrowful sight—raw-boned, sunken-eyed, and matted beards, with our clothing made of raw furs. Minnie, too, was a pitiful object, although through it all she still wore a smile. They spoke to us in a language we did not understand—and this was saying a great deal, for Minnie and

Bill between them could speak seven languages. Nevertheless, this was a new one. Bill remarked once or twice that some of the words sounded like Eskimo, but Minnie said that they looked like Norwegians. Finding that we could not understand them, they motioned for us to follow them, which we were glad to do.

We soon came to a beaten trail, about half a mile from where we had been traveling. To think that we had been working our way through the brush and trees, when a good trail was so near!

While blazing our way through the brush—before reaching the trail—I heard one of my pups howl, and saw it dashing towards me. Looking past him I saw, in hot pursuit, a krugar, an animal resembling a mountain lion.

“Quick, Bill! Where is the gun?”

I had no more than spoken the words when one of the natives raised his spear and aimed at the krugar.

It barely grazed the pup, but hit the animal with true markmanship, reminding me of the fable of William Tell, who shot an apple off his son’s head to save his own neck.

After this incident, we continued quietly on our

way, although little Minnie made several attempts to talk with the newcomers, first trying Norwegian, then in turn Swedish, Finnish, Danish, German and French. They seemed to understand some of the words in each language, but not enough to carry on a conversation. Bill even tried Greek, Latin and Siwash, but their gibberish was beyond any of us.

Our new-found friends, for such we decided they were, had walked with us about half a mile on the beaten trail, when we came to an old, half tumbled-down stone house, which they motioned us to enter, assisting us in taking in our outfits. Here there were several men, women and children, and as each member of the household saw us, they looked in wonder and amazement.

The clothing worn by the men was made of furs and skins, consisting of a coat and skirt, instead of trousers. All of them wore long beards and hair to their shoulders. This surprised us, for we had always understood that an Eskimo could raise no beard.

They wore high-top moccasins, or what are known as mutlocks, and a braided grass hat. From all appearances they had the disposition and manner of

Dunkards or Mormons. The women wore loose skin robes belted in at the waist. The attitude of these people towards one another was apparently all kindness, and they treated us the same.

By motions they instructed us what to do.

We sat for some time in a large room, which we thought to be the general assembly room of the household, possibly the dining hall.

As we sat there wondering what they were going to do next, a tall, angular girl entered, bringing a large earthen crock, also bowls and ivory spoons, and motioned us to eat. A second invitation was not required. We filled and refilled our bowls, for the soup was fine; none of us had ever tasted anything like it before. Besides this, we had boiled mutton, with artichokes and bread, which was a kind of hardtack. The women sat around and kept their eyes steadily fixed upon us, for to them we were peculiar looking objects.

We were still completely dressed in uncured furs, and in this warm climate the skins were spoiling, creating a fearful odor, but it was all the clothing we had. Minnie again attempted her many languages, but finding words of no use, by signs she

made them understand that we wanted clothing. When finally they did grasp our meaning, they at once supplied us with other garments.

Bill and I were shown to a small swimming-pool, while Minnie was left with the women, who provided her with clean clothing and a place to bathe.

We spent the night in this tumble-down house, which at one time had evidently been a famous building, but through age and neglect there were now but three habitable rooms.

CHAPTER XXII.

RUINS OF THE CITY OF TYRON

The next morning we had a good breakfast of steamed cracked wheat and goat's milk, after which, imagine our surprise to see standing before the door, an old-fashioned two-wheeled cart, drawn by a morox.

The morox is short-legged, with wonderful horns, an animal claimed by science to be extinct. Nevertheless, these people had one hitched up and were working it, proving to us that we were in an unknown country, for Bill was a student of zoology, and declared that the morox was not in existence in any part of the known world. 13

Our outfits, sleds and all, were loaded on the cart, and they motioned for us to get in. We made no effort to ask them where they were taking us, for it was of no use. However, we were quite willing to give ourselves into their charge, for surely we could not fare worse than we had for the past months.

To Minnie, everything seemed familiar. As we would pass some old building, or a stone wall, she would exclaim, "Oh yes, I remember that place quite well. I was only ten years old when I first saw it."

"My word, Minnie," said Bill, "I fear for your mind, doncherknow, for you were never in this country before."

"Perhaps not, in this life," she answered, "but I have been here before. I have had dreams of this country in my sleep and visions of it when I was awake. I was not sure I would ever see it in reality; but fate has brought me here. I am surely charmed."

"Yes, bah jove," said Bill, "and the dogs, too, must be charmed with the country, for see how they romp and play and bark with glee."

The dogs had been accustomed to much faster traveling than that afforded by an ox-cart. Becoming impatient, they undertook to seize the morox by the nose, until I was compelled to tie them behind the cart. Immediately, they threw their weight in the collar and started to assist in pulling the load, for they imagined they were in harness, and knew their duty. This seemed to amuse the natives.

The pups had never seen a cart before, so it kept us busy seeing that they were not run over.

Even at this apparently slow gait we made eighteen miles that day, for the lake furnished a hazy light, which made it possible for us to travel early and late. That night we arrived at a small village of about two hundred inhabitants. The natives here viewed us with curiosity.

Great beads of sweat stood on our brows and we had to keep fanning ourselves, although the natives seemed perfectly comfortable. We readily understood that, for after traveling on glaciers and ice so many weeks our blood had thickened. We noticed also, to our great discomfort, upon nearing the lake the climate became warmer.

Now and then as we traveled along we looked at the great tower through the field-glass, and tried to understand the natives when they attempted to tell us what it was.

Once I remarked, "Never mind, we'll find out what it is. It may be our burial place, who knows; for these people never laugh—they barely smile over the antics of the dogs. They take things too seriously to be safe." They appeared to look upon us with great pity.

The natives took us to a stopping-place, which from all appearance was an ancient inn of some kind. They showed us where to keep the dogs, but thinking some harm might come to them, Bill decided to remain with them, and we managed to make the men understand this. He was given a portion of an unoccupied building adjoining, and furnished with some food for the dogs.

In this room he found some whole wheat, the grains of which were the size of grains of corn, so running to me he exclaimed :

"I say, this is the country where the bloomin' goose, which we shot on the glacier, found the large wheat!"

After we had examined the grain, he returned to the out-building and finished cooking the dogs' supper. In the meantime, the women prepared our food, then served it in much the same manner in which they did in the first stone house.

The following morning, after a most refreshing sleep, I sauntered into what was once a court, where I found Bill giving an exhibition to a large company of natives. The two dogs, hitched to a sled, were pulling him over the bare ground, thereby showing their strength in harness.

"Hello, Bill, how did you sleep last night?" I exclaimed.

"I was so warm, dry and comfortable in the bed," replied Bill, "blast me if I could sleep. I got up and found a stick and put it across the bunk under me, in order to feel natural, but it was of no use. Then I decided to get out of the bunk and lay on the floor with the dogs, where I soon fell asleep. Drot it, I suppose I can never become accustomed to living like a white man again."

The next morning, we resumed our journey, but instead of the morox, we had a team of reindeer, hitched tandem to a lighter cart, and we surely did make good time. As we started, the natives looked at us with sad eyes, filled with pity. This made us feel uncertain as to their future intentions. Still we meant to enjoy life while we could, for after our terrible hardships and the constant worry as to what new and worse difficulty we were next to encounter, this brief relaxation from concern for the future was joy untold.

In this manner we traveled two days, stopping noon and night at some camp for refreshments and sleep; until at last, just at dusk, we arrived at the

ruined city seen many days before through our glass.

Here we were furnished a half-tumbled down, small, stone cabin. There were many like this, with now and then a large one the shape of a crescent.

The inside of the crescent formed a yard and playground, many families occupying apartments in this crescent-shaped building. The interior of the building occupied by us had been once beautifully decorated with lava tiling of many shades.

All the roofs were flat and made of lava, similar to glazed tile. The lava tiles had been cemented together with a material like sulphur, used in the place of mortar.

Minnie, when examining the cabin, found a mark on the stone, which she said was an emblem of Norway. This was apparently the mark of the builder, and she declared at once that these people must have been Norwegians, who had forgotten their own language. She said she knew her people wherever she found them; even though they failed to recognize the Scandinavian languages, they could not disguise their features.

This cabin had the prettiest floor imaginable, made from this same lava tiling. It was in different

squares and forms, and cemented in the same manner as the roof.

We retired early that evening, and in the morning Bill and I arose just at daybreak, and were met at the door by the largest crowd of people we had seen for a long time. All seemed to be there to meet us, but not seemingly to greet us. They looked at us in wonder and we returned their gaze, for among them were men who looked like Norwegians, others resembling Eskimos, except they had blond hair and blue eyes, and even one who looked like a Jew; one or two of Italian descent, and several Russians. This proved to my satisfaction that their ancestors had come from different countries—but how did they get there? They all spoke the same tongue.

"Bill, let's go down and have a look at the lake that we've been traveling so long to get to," I suggested.

"Perhaps these blasted people won't let us," answered Bill. "I feel like a prisoner, doncherknow."

"Well," I said, "we can start, and if they stop us we can come back."

"Blow me, if that isn't a capital idea. I hadn't

thought of that, doncherknow. Drot it, there is no use in asking permission, for they would not understand us, so let's be off."

Calling little Minnie, we started out through the crowd, our dogs following us. The people made way for us, but continued to stare, some of them following us toward the lake.

Before reaching the water, we came to what had once been a beautiful park, about five hundred feet from the shore. There was no vegetation closer to the water than this park. The walks were shaded with banana trees and all manner of tropical palms, which appeared to be of natural growth.

We sat down on a carved stone seat in the park, for on nearing the lake the heat became unbearable. By this time the dogs' tongues were out, and they were panting with the heat. The pups kept on going until about half way to the water's edge, when suddenly, howling and running, they came toward us, holding up first one foot, then the other, having burned them to a blister on the hot rocks. We could now see why vegetation grew no nearer the lake.

While sitting there, a man who resembled a Rus-

sian came toward us and shook hands. Minnie spoke to him in German, then in Danish. He shook his head, not understanding. Then she tried Norwegian and Swedish, but he still made no reply. Finally Bill jumped up, crying, "Parlez-vous Francais?" The man took Long Bill in his arms, crying, "Oui, oui, monsieur. Oui, oui!" Then rattling on in French, he gave Bill no opportunity to reply.

I had a feeling that probably Bill's French was limited, and that his question had exhausted it; but not so. Presently Bill bellowed out something in French to the Russian, which stopped his chatter. Then Bill began to talk. After talking about ten minutes, he remarked to us in English:

"It cost my guardian about five thousand dollars to teach me that bloomin' language, and blow me if this isn't the first time I have ever had any use for it. My word, this chap knows everything, except how to talk without using his bloomin' hands."

"Well, then, Bill," I said, "this is a grand opportunity to find out something about this country. Ask him if the lake is going dry or why the water

is so far out, and where the darn trail is that leads out of the country."

"I'll try to, Professor, but I am a bit rusty at French."

Bill started in on him, nevertheless, and they talked and talked to one another. Repeatedly, I asked Bill, "What does he say?"

Bill made no reply, and the Russian kept on talking. At last I had to remind Bill that it was the height of ill manners to speak a foreign language in the presence of a person who did not understand it. Bill took me by the arm, urging:

"Wait, Professor, this is a new discovery that the world knows nothing of."

"Tell us what it is about Bill, and then I'll have the patience to wait."

"It's the effect of the sun on the tide."

I remarked, "Go on, the sun does not affect the tide, it's the moon. The sun has been useless ever since Joshua stopped it."

At this he gave my arm a good shake and told me to stop my bloomin' foolishness, for this conversation was serious.

Finally they finished, and Bill turned around to me, but did not speak at first.

"Well, what did he say?" I asked.

"Blow me if I can talk, for thinking. I asked him if the lake was drying up, or what caused the water to be so far out.

"Yes, and—"

"He went into detail and explained to me a thing I had never thought or heard of. He said the tide was out, and blast me if he didn't say that it was the sun which affected the tide instead of the moon."

"Oh, he is losing his mind," I said. "Those are not orthodox ideas."

"Orthodox ideas be blowed! The extent of knowledge of the average person is what they have been taught, or what they have read. Their education is artificial, doncherknow, and they have little or no practical knowledge. *All of their ideas have been thought out by the thinking few, and handed to them in print generations afterward.*"

"So this man is one of the thinking few, is he?" I queried.

"Yes," Bill answered. "He says that he is a Russian student, and was also educated in France, doncherknow, but on account of certain socialist opinions he was exiled from his country to Siberia.

From there he made his escape, and by accident found this country, where the bloomin' customs existing here, and the thought of hardships to be met in leaving, have forced him to remain. However, he says it is not at all unpleasant, for here there is everything that man's heart could wish for.

"This chap says that while it is generally claimed that the moon causes the tides, since arriving in this country he finds it to be the sun, doncherknow, not the moon, that affects the tide.

"He tells me the name of this jolly fine country is Tapond. It is located in a magnetized area, which is the real attraction of the compass. This magnetized area covers many thousands of miles, and upon reaching it the compass is no longer true, doncherknow, and for this reason no man can ever discover the north pivot by the aid of a bloomin' compass. Besides this, the sun is the most powerful thing in the known universe. It draws this magnetized portion of the earth, and if the sun be on one side or the other of this space, it slightly tips the earth towards it, causing the change of tide all over the world."

"No wonder they exiled that fellow from Rus-

sia," I remarked. "Ask him, Bill, what he would use in place of the compass."

"A glass tube of radium, so prepared that the sun affects it, and points east instead of north. Every twelve hours it swings upon its pivot, and by figuring out the time of day, and the day of the year, a fellow can determine the exact direction he is traveling."

After explaining this to me Bill then inquired of the Russian, "What language do these people use?" and was told that they spoke a sort of Eskimo gibberish, where one grunt means over two hundred words,—but it depends on the manner in which one grunts.

This man informed Bill that there was another crater at the opposite end of the lake, not quite so active as the one near us. About every three weeks it threw forth a gas which curdled the moisture of the air into rain.

"Then, Bill," I began, "according to that, all that would be necessary is to study the nature of this gas and it could be used in any portion of the earth where rain is most needed?"

"No," Bill answered, "you would be ridiculed by the public as a rainmaker."

The lake was covered with phosphorus, and we could now understand why it looked like fire at night. The sulphur in the water was so thick that it washed up in ridges on the shore.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHIEF

After Bill's conversation with the Russian, we returned to our cabin, as we now called it, for it had been assigned to us for shelter; and our guides, the two big Norwegians, brought us some boiled wheat and goats' milk, also bananas and fruit of many kinds. We were in a tropical climate now, a veritable "Garden of Eden," and these natives showed a desire to give us the best the country afforded, and made every effort to understand our wishes.

"My word, but I do believe these people are cannibals," said Bill, "and intend to fatten us up and have a pot-latch, like some of the tribes in South Africa when they catch a tender-foot. When they get us good and fat they'll put us in a bloomin' pot and boil us up, and the whole tribe will have a feast, doncherknow."

"Well, Bill," I answered, "if they wait till you get fat, we'll live a long time."

We remained in the stone cabin all day, feasting and gazing on the wonderful lake, which furnished warmth and life to all of the surrounding country, and created various climates, for by traveling a few miles toward the lake or away from the lake one could live in any climate he desired.

All about us seemed to be high-peaked, rocky mountains, covered with snow, excepting in the direction of the volcano, the route by which we entered the country. Ever since we arrived we could see a thick grey smoke hovering over the glacier and the mountains we had passed over.

The next day we three, with our dogs, took a stroll through the ruins of what had been a great city, going in and out of buildings which resembled the ancient part of Norway, and passing many interesting and curious sights. Finally, we came to an open space, which had been paved with square stones, but was now nearly overgrown with shrubbery and various tropical plants. In the center of this square was a large statue of a man with high cheek bones, the true type of a Norwegian.

Carved on the face of the rock, under the statue, was the picture of a viking ship, such as Eric the

Red might have used when he discovered America,
~~four hundred years before Christopher Columbus~~
touched the Indies.

This vessel was built like a large row boat, with a square sail; the head of a dragon was carved on the bow, a fish's tail on the stern, and the sides hung with shields and armor of war. It was manned by twenty men, ten on each side, each man with an oar, and a man in the center of the boat, with two mallets and a block in front of him. From all appearances he was keeping time for the oarsmen. On the pedestal under the ship was an inscription.

Suddenly Minnie stopped and clapped her hands with glee, crying aloud, "I knew these people were Norwegians, for here is a verse in that language."

As she read it aloud, first in Norwegian, and then in English, the natives who were still following us and squatting around us in little groups, chattering and grunting—more grunts than anything else—watched her in amazement. The verse read as follows:

"We know not whence we came or where we go;
Believe as we will, we do not know."

"Sealed within this stone is a history of this country."

Just then a distinguished looking man, much more intelligent looking than the others, came up to us.

"Ah," exclaimed Minnie, "my prince! I knew it! I knew I would find him."

She at once tried her many languages on him, but Bill exclaimed, "Drot it, it is useless to try to hold a conversation with these fellows, for they cannot understand anything but their own gibberish."

At which the stranger gave Bill a sharp look, and said in carefully chosen words, like one learning to read, "Then speak to me in your words. I understand."

Imagine our surprise to hear one of these strange people using our language. Pointing to the statue, he asked Minnie to read. After she had read and translated it into English, seemingly to his astonishment—for he evidently knew the meaning of the inscription, as well as the English translation—he expressed his pleasure by seizing Minnie's hand, giving it much too hearty a squeeze to suit me, while he smiled into her eyes.

He made us understand in his few simple English words, and by gestures, that she was the first one he knew of that had been able to read the inscription, outside of the chief who taught him, who

had in turn been taught by the chief before him. He said the statue represented the chief of a band of pirates who discovered this country in the fifteenth century.

As he turned to leave, he said, "I will send a man who can talk to you."

Minnie started right out to follow him, and I had to call to her. I asked her why she had followed the man, and her reply was that she knew not. She seemed to be attracted to him just as our compass had been attracted toward the great iron mountain.

"So after all, I am not the real attraction of my Little Compass?" I asked.

Minnie's reply was, "I have known you only a day in comparison with the length of time I have known this man. For he has visited me in my dreams since childhood. It was he that I was following the night in the swamp when I nearly walked out of the boat."

"Perhaps he won't recognize you, as you have him," I replied, hoping that this might be the case. To this she made no answer—but her occasional backward glances told me where her thoughts were.

One of the natives then escorted us to the palace

of Chief Eric, as we eventually learned him to be. This proved to be the tall, tower-like castle we had seen through our glass as we entered the country.

This castle had been ten or twelve stories high, and its ruins covered about one block. It was built of stone, decorated and trimmed with different shades of tiling, made from the melted lava that at times flowed from the volcano.

We were shown into a portion of the palace, which was decorated and draped like a Turkish salon, with oriental rugs, statues and pictures. The tiled floor resembled an ancient pavement of Roman Mosaic, with its many designs and colors. For the first time since entering the country we saw firearms, although these were hanging on the walls. None were of a modern type, most of them being the old-fashioned blunderbuss and flint-lock rifles—evidently relics from a pirate ship.

The natives pointed out to us the rooms we were to occupy. These had once been very beautiful, but evidently were not much in use. Steps lead from a balcony into a large enclosure, in the center of which a tangle of flower-covered vines completely overspread a small, dome-like structure about twelve

feet high. Upon investigation, this proved to be a bathing-pool, filled with warm water.

We had been guests in the castle for two days, during which time we saw nothing of the chief, when an old man, wearing a long grey beard, was brought to us. He greeted us cordially, shaking hands with each of us. Speaking in broken English, he told us that he was an American who many years before had been aboard an ill-fated exploring vessel.

It was carried partly through the open channel of the Northern Sea and crushed in the ice. After long suffering and fearful hardships he, with one companion, had reached this country, where he had remained all these years, for the hardship to be endured in order to get out of the country was greater than all the pleasure to be derived from returning to civilization. The hope and longing to see his own country and friends, who were no doubt all dead by this time, had long since been abandoned. He told us that he had been brought many miles to meet us.

It was indeed a great pleasure to actually meet a person who spoke English, and who had at one

time lived in the United States. Knowing his English to be much broken—in fact, he had forgotten many of our words—he informed us that we were the first English speaking people with whom he had had an opportunity to speak his native tongue since he had been in the country, with the exception of the chief, whom he had taught what he knew of the language.

We told him that we would like very much to have him for our friend and companion, as we were anxious to learn the manners and customs of these people, and to have explained to us the many things we failed to understand.

He expressed his willingness and pleasure to do this, and said that he would undoubtedly, for a while at least, be with us most of the time; and that there would be no hurry for us to learn from him, as we had the rest of our lives in which to acquire the language and ways of this people, for it was next to impossible for any of us to leave that country again. He said no white man was ever known to live to cross the Rockies to the outside, for it was necessary to pass many uncivilized tribes of blond Eskimos. The Norwegian Eskimos that live on

the coast were friendly, but in between were many miles of unknown trail over which no white man had ever passed. Besides, these people did not want the outside world to have a knowledge of their beautiful paradise, or of their honest people.

After half an hour's conversation, he told us that he had been requested by Chief Eric to ask us by what route we had reached the country, and what our mission was. With as few words as possible, we reviewed our trip and arrival there.

"I will tell our Chief what you have said," he answered, "but I doubt very much that he will believe you, for no living thing ever crossed that glacier before. Many an expedition has attempted it, always to perish; if not from the cold, from the poisonous gases. There never has been a time, to our knowledge, when the top of this glacier is not covered with gas and smoke from the volcano, inasmuch as the glacier is the same height as the mouth of the crater."

We assured him that we had come that way, and had passed over this route upon which he claimed all living things must perish. We then told him that a very heavy fog, or steam, had settled on us

that night. He remembered it well, and said that everyone had noticed the steam from the mouth of the crater. Such a dense steam at this season of the year had not occurred before within the memory of even the oldest native.

"The great Supreme Power must have been with you, and provided a way for you to pass over the glacier alive, for some purpose."

At once I thought of Minnie and her dreams.

We asked where the hot water came from, and he told us a great geyser in the side of the volcano, whereupon we told him something he had never heard. That was, that the water supplying this geyser came from a river flowing into a cave under the magnetized iron mountain; not appearing again, until, after being heated on its course through the base of the volcano, it reappeared as this geyser. Besides this, we told him that we had entered this cave and found it to be very rich in placer gold.

"So that accounts for the gold we find near this geyser," he replied.

"Your hot geyser also accounts to us for the disappearing river," I said, "and the terrific noise heard in the cave under the magnetized mountain. It

sounded to us as if a huge coffee-pot were boiling over. Then a great gust of steam would fill the cave, as if the river were pouring into an immense fire; which proves to us that the river flows through the base of this volcano, where it receives its heat. When the swamps we crossed freeze up, the river ceases to flow into the volcano."

"And that is why we have winter and summer," said the sailor, "and why the geyser does not flow in the winter, which causes a lowering of temperature. There is no water flowing through it at this time of the year, and the heat of the volcano and the mountain is more intense, keeping the surrounding country from freezing up."

"And if this volcano should cease to be active in this latitude, your country would freeze up altogether?"

"Yes," he conceded, "quite true."

"The ancient people who built this city," continued the old man, "must have done placer mining, for we find among the ruins gold coins, on one side of which is the picture of a Viking ship; on the other, the face of the Norwegian whose statue is to be seen in the middle of the square."

As he handed us a gold coin to examine, he continued: "This is the largest coin that has ever been found, and would equal in value about twenty dollars of American money. As the coins grow smaller they bear the likenesses of different men with high-cheeked bones, evidently Norwegians, who have perhaps ruled this country. Now, I must leave you, as I have to report our interview to the chief, but I will see you again soon."

The next morning, accompanied by our friend the old sailor, Bill, Minnie and I, dressed in our peculiar costumes, which consisted of a skirt, coat and grass hat, started out again to see the great hot lake,

Again we came to the beautiful park encircling the lake. Some of the trees had perished during the terrific heat of that dreadful night we had passed on the summit of the glacier. This change in conditions must have been especially provided for us, as the old sailor said; for we had escaped the gas by being enclosed in a foggy vapor, which in twenty minutes had turned the climate on the glacier from sixty below zero, to temperate heat.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MARRIAGE LAWS

We stood and gazed toward the volcano, which was belching forth blaze and smoke into the sky. As we watched, the smoke gradually disappeared beyond the mountain and glacier.

"Well, Minnie," I finally said, "I heard you crying once to the blaze of this volcano, to give up its secrets and tell you of your prince. Do you think it has harkened to your call?"

"I believe I have met my choice, and I intend he shall choose me."

"Were you looking for your prince when you started with us down the river from Dawson?" I inquired.

"I was always looking for my prince, but never expected to meet him in this country. But love goes where it is sent, they say, even unto the North Pole."

"Well, let's forget it for the present, dear—and look! there is the blaze from the volcano again. It

beats like the heart of the earth, for it appears every so often, and gives life to this wonderful country."

We spoke no more, but stood in deep thought, for, dear reader, if you could have seen the sight we were now gazing upon you would be able to better understand our discovery, where now there may rest a doubt in your mind, and it may be years before explorers will be able to prove to you the existence of this grand garden spot of earth, the birthplace of man.¹¹ Of course, I have not explained to you all of this trip, for I am under obligations to this people and the girl I left behind not to give the true route to this country, and besides, the tribes of Eskimos I have seen where missionaries have been among them are pitiful, but when they are left to their own resources they are healthy, strong and happy, so there will always be a missing link in this story. Though our discovery is in advance of science, man's greatest benefit to the world is best known after he is dead.

After returning to the castle, we were supplied with a lunch, mainly of fruits, of which many kinds were plentiful in that country, from the hard winter apple to the banana, orange and pineapple. One won-

dered where all these varieties grew, but this country, as I have said before, had all the climates, from the coldest to the warmest, for the closer to the lake one went the warmer it became.

Chief Eric seemed to have a thorough knowledge of his country, and I was surprised to find out later that he also had an extensive knowledge of the world, for among the prisoners escaped from Siberia who had found their way to this land, by other routes, were two thoroughly educated students. These men had traveled all over the world, and had a general knowledge of all countries.

We saw little of Bill these days, as he spent most of his time with the French-Russian, and each night he would tell us what he had learned during the day.

"I say, Professor, what do you think? The Russian took me up to his home. Blow me if he isn't married to a jolly fine little native."

"What! Is he married? Who did he find willing to tie up for life to a horrid man?"

"Oh, no! not for life, doncherknow. Marriage here is arranged by contract, five years at a time."

Minnie then asked, "What is their plan of marriage?"

Marriages, as explained to me by the Russian," Bill replied, "are all conducted by the chief for a period of five seasons, and if both parties are going on well and satisfied at the end of that time with their married life, blow me if they don't try it over, renew the contract, and have another wedding and a jolly good time. All their lives they continue to do this every five seasons; but if at any time they have a hair-pulling, or fist-fight, or disagreement of any kind, doncherknow, they can fail to renew their marriage vows, which frees them. And, drot it, don't you see, this causes each party to make a special effort to please the other, for fear his companion will not be willing to renew the marriage at the end of the contract. A capital plan, doncherknow."

"But," I asked, "in case there is a family of children and both parties, or one party, is dissatisfied and refuses to renew the marriage at the end of the five years, what becomes of the children?"

"They are put in a public place of training and cared for away from the environment of wrangling parents."

After a pause he added, "My word, doncherknow, by this method children are given a rightful chance early in life to get broader views of the principles of life, and are not handicapped in the beginning by the narrow-minded, orthodox ideas of generations gone."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LOST LOVE.

That evening Chief Eric called upon us in our apartments. We had learned from the old sailor, as we called him, that the Chief was pure Norwegian, a descendant of a band of pirates who lived in the days of Eric the Red, although part of his tribe were mixed with Eskimo, as well as other nationalities, who from time to time had found their way to this country and intermarried.

Upon catching sight of Minnie, he stepped up and stroked her hair. She looked like a different individual since bathing, washing her beautiful blonde hair and putting on different clothing. As he stroked her hair, he looked into her eyes, and gave her a winning smile, which meant more than words.

After holding a few moments' conversation with us, he invited Minnie to look further through the ruins of the palace with him.

A cold chill came over me, because I began to see a light in her eyes that I had never seen there before, and I realized that this man was not only a chief in name but a prince in appearance. Tall, with wavy black hair and a jet black mustache and beard (all men here wore beards), heavy black eye-brows, long eye-lashes, and beautiful teeth. This man answered the description of the prince whom Minnie had dreamed about in the boat. He was graceful in every way and seemingly very kind at heart, and she being a decided blonde, they seemed to act like the magnet and the nail. I always knew that Minnie was the compass, but was now beginning to fear that this Chief was her attraction.

I asked Bill if he noticed this; he assured me that he had not, and that I need have no fear, for after passing through the sufferings Minnie had experienced with us, there was no possible chance for her ever to forsake us or forget our kindness. But this did not satisfy me and I paced the floor.

The country had no more charms for me; I had no further interest in it, and at once told Bill that I would shoulder my rifle and fight my way out of

the country, and take with me the only woman I had ever loved.

Well I knew the impossibility of what I was saying, but in my rage forgot my situation.

I went out of our apartments and started to search the palace for her, thinking perhaps I might show her the wrong of being separated from us. I was afraid to trust them alone together, for he seemed to have a great power over her. So on I went through one room after another, up and down winding stairs, through corridors and courts. At last I pulled aside a heavy curtain, and there, seated upon a fur-covered bench, was the Chief, and on some beautiful cushions at his feet sat Minnie, looking into his eyes and repeating after him words he was trying to teach her.

My feet seemed to be glued to the tile floor where I stood, and I was speechless, for I had never seen Minnie look like this. At last I found my voice and cried aloud, "Minnie, you surely have not forgotten—you surely haven't forsaken me. Come back!"

She replied, "I have come a long way, through great suffering, to find the prince of my life's

dream. Now that I have found him, you must not interfere. Your mission has been fulfilled; you have been my guide to bring me to my prince. I dismiss you with honors—what more can I do?"

I felt my knees weaken under me and I cried aloud, "My God, why did I not freeze out there on the glacier? Why have I lived to experience this great sorrow?"

I returned to our apartments and told Bill. He did not believe me, so I led him back and showed him what I had seen; and when she saw both of us looking at her, she came forward. Chief Eric looked after her, but did not move. He stroked his mustache, and seemed to be in deep thought. Slipping her hand in mine as if to pacify me, she turned and smiled goodby at the Chief, and went with us to our apartments.

When we were alone, Bill and I had a long talk with Minnie, and asked her what the Chief had said.

"He told me that I was to occupy the seat of honor in this country with him," she said, "because I love him, and he loves me. His whole life long he has dreamed a dream and had a hope that the Supreme Power, which the people of this country

worship, would some day send him a beautiful interpreter, who would not only read the legend on the stone, but would also interpret the longing in his heart, which gave him more anxiety. He said we were destined for each other since the day of our birth, although born many thousand miles apart. *This Supreme Power, whatever it may be, and too deep for man's knowledge,* has worked out our fate, and brought me many miles across seas, swamps and glaciers to share his happiness and his country."

"Did he not understand that you were mine?" I asked.

"He asked me that question; if by any law of our country or people that either of you had a claim upon me. I assured him that you had not."

"Then after all your pretension of love for me you told him that I had no claim on you?"

"My pretension of love for you? I did not know that I had pretended to love you. I like you, and I think you have been a very good friend to me, but you must not forget that I have gone through a great deal of suffering in your company."

"Never mind, Professor," said Bill, "most all men who have brought their wives or sweethearts

to Alaska have lost them as soon as they saw a brighter future, so leave the Chief to his fate, for after all *a smart man is but a weak fool when alone with a flattering woman.*"

Minnie remained with us in our apartment, and we sat by the window well into the night, talking and watching the action of the volcano and the lake.

The "sulphur and electricity" caused the lake to look beautiful at night. I can think of no more proper name to give to this substance, for it acted like electricity and caused every ripple on the lake to sparkle, which furnished a dim light over the entire city.

CHAPTER XXVI.

WOMAN'S SCORN

The next morning I expected Chief Eric to return for Minnie, and was thinking how I would express to him my love for her whom he was so cruelly stealing from me, but I was disappointed again. He did not come near us or send for her, nor interview us for almost a week.

During that time Minnie was very restless, and went so far as to undertake to find him, but it was of no use. She could not see him, nor hear from him in any way, so I told her that perhaps he had noticed my affection for her; that they were very honest people, and would not interfere in any love affair.

She stormed at me in rage, and for the first time during my acquaintance with her did not smile when she spoke to me. Minnie, my Little Compass, always smiled when she spoke to anyone. I had never heard her speak ill of anyone; I had never

known her to be sorrowful, or to tell an untruth; I had never known her to be downhearted; but now her whole appearance changed, and she met my eyes with a stare that I will always remember. Bill, having a ready remark, warned me, "Be careful, Professor, for *there is nothing so deucedly shocking in all this world as a woman's scorn—and snake bites.*"

Bill was a fool in some ways, but a philosopher in others, and I always thought *it required a philosopher to understand a woman.*

Here Minnie left us and went out on the stone veranda, and gazed wistfully down the ancient paved road which encircled the lake. Nevertheless, she did not see the object for which she was searching. Finally, she returned, looking disappointed, and would not speak to either Bill or me.

The next morning our American sailor friend came to the castle, and said that he was now at liberty to remain with us as long as we wanted him. We were walking in the court after breakfast when he arrived, and the first question Bill asked was, "How did these men happen to find us on our arrival in this country?"

"The two men who brought you here were out hunting at the time they came across you, and hearing your shot became alarmed at the unusual sound. Upon investigating, they saw the smoke of your camp, and were again very much surprised. But they sought you out, and when you were found to be strangers, they brought you in with them."

"There is but one entrance to this country," he continued. "It is across a low divide near the outlet of the lake; for it has an outlet in a disappearing river which flows through the base of a second volcano, at the lower end of the lake, where it empties into the sea. This undoubtedly creates the warm current that flows through into the Arctic ocean, and causes the open channel that so many men have passed through in search of the North Pole, simply to return by the way of Siberia.

"In a similar way all warm currents are caused in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The water seeps through the base of an underground volcano, then empties into the sea at some point, and creates a hot current."

"This lake provides us," he continued, "with hot bathing pools which we will visit later, and the

water is allowed to seep from the lake through the earth, purifying it; but it still retains its natural heat. The water drains into a large basin, built of tile and surrounded by a wall. There are many such bathing pools throughout the city, the largest of which is in the private grounds of the castle.

"The faith the people have in this hot water for bathing purposes cures them from all aches, pains, and sickness. We have no other remedy. But after all, it is the faith that cures them, not the water."

Bill then asked the sailor if he was sorry that he was an outcast from civilization, and was compelled to remain here for the rest of his days. He replied that he was for the first few years; but when he lived in civilization, he used to be an habitual drunkard, and after each voyage he would go ashore and squander, in drink and dissipation, his time, money and health; but as there was no liquor in this country, he realized it was the best place for him.

"Have these people no beverage?" asked Bill.

"None whatever," he replied.

As the old sailor departed, Bill's friend, the Russian, was ushered into the court, and Bill now

directed his conversation to him, in French.

During their interview, I had a heart to heart talk with Minnie, trying to plead my cause, but it was of no use.

"What were you and the Russian talking about this time, Bill?" I asked, as he joined us.

"That bloomin' chap keeps me in deep thought all the time. He tells me that in this country they have the mammoth. When I told him we had found the tusk and skull of a mammoth, the head of a morox, and some bones of the ibex, near Dawson, he tried to make out that this whole country was once a tropical climate, caused by hot geysers, hot lakes and volcanoes. Blast it, the fellow convinces me, doncherknow; for it's well I remember of a rotten palm-leaf that I dug out while prospecting on Henderson Creek in the Yukon country."

"Well, what of it, Bill? This was before our time. Blessed is the man who does not think, but lets other men think for him. *A tired brain is more apt to kill a man than a tired muscle*, so quit thinking, Bill. However, if the outer world knew of this land, it could supply many a missing link in science and history."

"Yes," said Bill, "I know of three links that have been missing in all the studies of my life. One is the location of the attraction of the compass, which we have discovered on this trip; another is the source of the hot water which causes the warm currents of the ocean and the open channel of the North Sea; and the third, which is of most importance, is that the sun, not the moon, influences the tide."

"Yes, boys," said the sailor, who entered in time to hear the last of our conversation, "this is a wonderful country, and this is why these people are so careful to keep this intelligence from the rest of the world, for as soon as a new country is discovered, civilized nations at once send as advance soldiers, missionaries, who are to subdue the people, ready for the monopoly of a stronger race."

CHAPTER XXVII.

READING THE PARCHMENT

By this time we were told that dinner was ready, and that we would eat with Chief Eric. This was the first time we had seen him since he had the interview with Minnie. He shook hands with Long Bill and me; but when he came to Minnie, he simply bowed, taking his place at the head of the table.

When I saw this I was somewhat relieved, for after all, perhaps his was a passing fancy for her, and probably all my worry was for nothing.

Minnie kept watching him as he ate, as if to attract him.

While we were eating, the Chief of another band of natives arrived from the ruins of Kyron, on the opposite side of the lake, so we had no further chance for conversation with Chief Eric, much to Minnie's disappointment.

The next morning our old sailor returned bright and early, as usual, to help us with the native lan-

guage, and to teach us as much as he could of the ways of these people.

He spoke again of his entrance into this country; telling us of how their ship was crushed in the ice, and out of sixteen men he and one other reached this land of Tapond.

"Since my coming here," he continued, "there have been more than twenty strangers arrive at different times, and most of them, of late years, were escaped convicts from Siberia. In a party twelve years ago, there were five men and three women from Siberia. Two of the women and three of the men are still living."

Just then a native came to our door and told us that the Chief of Tyron wished to see us. We found him in council with the Chief of Kyron. Although these two men controlled entirely different tribes, they were the best of friends, and worked for each other's interest in all things. Any disputes arising between the two cities were settled by arbitrators. These men did not believe in settling their disputes by forcing their subjects to shoot one another.

Chief Eric introduced us to him with many

scrapes and bows. Upon seeing Minnie, he at once crossed the floor to her, placing his left hand on his breast, and the other on her shoulder, a custom used by them to show high esteem.

We were then seated in front of them, with the old sailor to act as interpreter. During the conversation little Minnie was the center of attraction, for they continually deferred to her opinion. Finally it was decided to open the sealed stone in the square the next day. We were told that it contained a manuscript, and if Minnie was able to read it to the Chief she would receive great honor. Then she would have one wish granted her, be it ever so great, for no one within the memory of these men had ever been able to read the inscription on the stone, or the parchment sealed therein.

After this conversation, Minnie turned to me and asked, "If you had your greatest wish, what would it be?"

"That I might leave this accursed country and take you with me, even if I died in the attempt," I answered.

"You have fulfilled your mission, and brought me to the end of my journey. Do not hope to take

me farther, for within my heart I know that this is the place for which I was destined. Though this country and people may seem strange to you, to me it seems like home, and I intend to remain here. I shall marry Chief Eric, and be granted one great wish, which will be, to provide a way for you and Bill to leave this country."

In return, I asked, "If Bill or I did not exist, what would your greatest wish be?"

"That I might be the wife of Eric, the Chief, and give up all thought of ever seeing any other country but Tapond."

I saw it was of no use, our Compass had been attracted by the Chief, and try as I might, it was hopeless. So I told her to please herself, and only hoped that she would be happy; and when she was asked for her greatest wish, let it be that I might be executed where she could see me die; that Bill might have his freedom from the country again, and be given a guide, so that he would be sure to reach the outer world safe and sound. To this she made no reply.

The next day with much pomp and splendor, amid a gathering of many people, the sealed stone, standing in the center of the square, was opened.

A book written on parchment, was brought forth, and with great care taken back to the palace. Minnie, decorated in a robe of honor, with the Chief of Kyron on one side and Chief Eric of Tyron on the other, stood up behind a kind of pulpit and read aloud from this ancient book. I could not understand one word, and I do not believe there was anyone there who did understand it, other than the Chief of Kyron, until she translated it.

Little did I know this Minnie, or realize the extent of her wisdom, as we braved the trail. She was no longer the Minnie of old. In her beautiful robes, what a contrast she was to the little figure on the glacier—dirty, ragged, and unkempt.

Bill remarked, "You'll soon get over it, Professor; *too much wisdom is not good in a woman.* She must be meek and dependent in order to retain a man's love."

Nevertheless, I realized only that I loved her. I recalled her as she helped draw the sled on the Skagway trail, and now to see her mounted behind a pulpit reading to the leader of a country! Such a change was more than I could stand, and my head seemed to whirl, and I reeled and fell—I knew not why.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE WEDDING.

The next morning I awoke and started to lift my head from the pillow, but found myself too weak to do so. By my side was a strange girl, young and beautiful, who was fanning me and bathing my head. Bill soon came in and I had a talk with him, and he agreed with me that I had lost my Compass, and it had surely found its attraction, for she did not so much as want to see me, and intended to marry the Chief.

After a great deal of persuasion from Bill, I promised to leave the country with him and go back to the United States as soon as I was able, for Minnie had told him that this would be her one demand of the Chief.

Minnie never came to see me after that, although I was ill for days.

As soon as I was able to be up again, the American sailor announced that Chief Eric wished to see

me. At first I decided that I would not see him, but again I thought perhaps I might in some way persuade him to give me back my Compass and allow us to leave the country, on a promise that we would never reveal any of its secrets, or the way to enter it.

When I met him he treated me very kindly, and asked me to come and sit by him. He had a lengthy conversation with the sailor in the native tongue, which the latter translated to me, and now and then the sailor would ask me a question, such as: "What country did you come from? What religion have you? Where did you meet this girl? Were you ever married to her? Do you think she loves you? Could you give her up without much sorrow, providing it would give her much happiness? Would you do anything in your power to make her happy, or would you wreck her happiness in order to gratify your own selfish affections? Many a man says that he loves a woman with his whole heart, yet he will wreck her whole life by persuading her to marry him when she loves another. This is not true love."

He then told me that the Chief had said to him

that he intended to marry our Little Compass, not altogether because she was able to read the legend, but because he loved her, and from all appearances she loved him.

The sailor assured me that it was useless for me to seek the love of Minnie, for she had been attracted in an opposite direction, and like the story we had told him of the iron mountain, no power could draw her away. Even though the Chief had avoided her presence for a long time, her mind was made up. He said that I had better use good judgment and leave the girl to her pleasant fate, for in this world we are all born free, and we should be able to retain that freedom throughout our lives. It should not be interfered with by any person, and for me to continue to seek the love and affection of a woman who did not love me in return was denying that woman her freedom.

"These are the words of the Chief," he continued. "He also says that in this country there are many beautiful women only too glad to make your acquaintance, and perhaps you could win the heart of some one of these, to supply you with the affection you so much desire."

"Tell him," said I, "that there is no other woman's love that could fill the place of my Compass, but that now as he is the attraction of that compass I will forfeit all interest in her, and do my best to forget. My only request of him is, that I can be removed to some part of this country where I will never come in contact with her, in case I have to remain here."

After the sailor had repeated my words, the Chief arose and placed around my neck a chain, on which was a small gold medal, which the sailor informed me was a pension and pass to any part of their country—that I could go unmolested and without expense wherever I saw fit. After this he dismissed us.

When I returned to our apartments, I met Bill and asked where he had been.

"Oh, I have been out in the bloomin' park, taking a sunbath. A jolly fine place, doncherknow. I say, Professor, while I was out there I chanced to meet Minnie, and had a little chat with her about the manuscript taken from the sealed stone."

"Did she tell you what it was all about, Bill?"

"Oh, yes, she told me that it was a history of the

first people who discovered this beautiful lake and named the country Tapond, meaning "teapot," for the spout of hot water which supplies the lake resembles the spout of a teapot, doncherknow. They were Norwegian pirates, fleeing from justice, who passed through the Northern channel and, like many others, their ship was crushed in the blasted ice. The occupants of the ship, consisting of eight women, who were prisoners, and fifteen men, succeeded in reaching this hot lake, and remained here.

"After a time the pirate chiefs disagreed; the stronger one drove the weaker one to the opposite side of the lake, where he established another tribe, and for the rest of their lives they lived apart. From time to time strangers arrived by accident in the country, which helped to increase the population, and these strangers each time brought news of the advancement of the world.

"The fear of these pirates that justice would overtake them caused them never to permit anyone to leave the country during their life. When a chief would die, a new one was selected, under oath to carry on the laws of the country just as they were started. They were always glad to have more

strangers arrive to help populate the vast rich land that they had discovered. The rest of the bloomin' book was simply the laws of the country."

"Did she ask for me, Bill?" I inquired anxiously.

"Not exactly," Bill answered, "but she asked me to tell you goodbye for her—and she was a bit cold about it, doncherknow. She said she never expected to see you again. Tomorrow, or the day after, she said you and I were to be removed from the country. A jolly fine joke, doncherknow. My word, I don't know whether I want to be off or not, for it is a deucedly fine country. She says to take all the dogs except the leader, and the way she says it you'd think she owned the bloomin' country, doncherknow."

"It's a hard blow, Bill, and I'll need your help to bear it. First we lost old Donovan, which was very sad; next we lost Nathason, the Jew. I risked my life for him, for I had advised him to continue the journey across the glacier with us. It gives me a cold chill now when I think of that crevice in the ice. I can still hear his groans far, far beneath me. After that, there were left only you and Little Minnie, our Compass, and me. Now

Bill, we have lost our Compass, and I scarcely can keep my brain in the right course without her. Give me your hand, my friend, and promise me that you will stay with me until death, which won't be long; for as I feel tonight, my life is short. I have lived but for a mission, which she says is achieved. She is through with me now, so what have I to live for?"

"Come, come, cheer up, old chap," said Bill. "It is a bit awkward to give you such a promise—but here is my bloomin' hand, until death. We may have a deucedly hard jolt out of this country, even if they will allow us to go, and I dread the blasted trip."

As the pale light from the waves of the lake flickered through the room I bade goodnight to Bill, who soon fell asleep; but I still sat in deep thought, wondering why fate had permitted me to meet one whom I had learned to love so dearly, and yet must lose so soon.

The next morning Minnie's wedding with Chief Eric took place in the square, under the statue, and to my surprise Bill and I were sent for by the Chief to attend the ceremony. On nearing the square we were ushered to a platform, erected and decorated

for the occasion. Here we were given choice places. Our friend, the American sailor, came and seated himself by us. "Why have I been sent for?" I asked. Does the Chief desire to inflict more torment upon me, to force me to come here and witness his marriage with the woman I love?"

"No, no," the sailor replied, "he requests me to tell you of a great obstacle to the marriage, which is yet to be overcome. It is positively against the laws of the country to conduct any marriage without the consent of a girl's parents, or guardian, who, in the marriage ceremony, must give the maid to the suitor. The Chief says he could hardly expect you to give the hand of your sweetheart to another man, so there is but one hope left, and that is your friend Bill. He will be called upon to place Minnie's hand in that of the Chief."

Jumping to my feet, I exclaimed, "If Minnie must be given away, I will do it myself. I found little Minnie on the Skagway trail, brought her safe and sound all this distance; and now that she is to be presented to him, it is my place to perform that duty."

I requested the sailor not to tell the Chief, but to

notify me when the time arrived to perform this act, which he did.

When I placed Minnie's hand in that of the Chief, a great light of satisfaction stole over her face, and she seemed to be herself again, happy and contented.

After the ceremony was over, both Minnie and the Chief put their arms around me, for in their happiness they overlooked my sorrow.

There was no sleep for me that night. I walked the floor of my apartment until the grey light of dawn crept in at my window. Many times during the night I regretted the day I was born. But then, after all, I reflected, if fate cannot ruin a man any other way it always can through a woman. The greatest of men have met their downfall in this way.

I was only too anxious now to start on the journey, for to leave this country was to get away from the greatest sorrow in my life. It mattered little to me if I should live to reach my destination or not, for life had no charm left.

When Bill awoke, he looked at me and exclaimed, "My word, man, what has happened to you? Your beard! Your hair! Drot it, it is white! What

have you done? Blast it! Have I slept the sleep of Rip Van Winkle, or has this bloomin' change come over you in one night? By Jove, twenty years have been added to your appearance."

"No, Bill," I answered, "it has been only one night, but you have slept, while I have suffered."

I looked in a small pocket mirror, and it was indeed as Bill had said. My hair and beard were white, and there were deep wrinkles in my face. I had become an old man in one night. When I saw this, I said to Bill, "We must be off early, for Minnie must never see me again. She could not be happy the rest of her life and know the blow she has dealt me."

CHAPTER XXIX.

LEAVING THE COUNTRY.

Early as it was, we found, at the door, two of the best guides in the country, with a large morox. Our dogs and outfit were all in readiness, and we were soon on our journey.

We learned from one of our guides that Minnie had promised to pay the penalty with her life, if either of us ever revealed the secrets of the land, or the true route to Tapond. This promise secured for us our freedom, and a permit from Chief Eric to leave the country, and be furnished with guides to cross the divide to the Arctic Ocean.

After traveling several days towards the Rockies, the climate became so cold that the morox had to be abandoned, and again we were in our natural element, "mushing" the trail with one of the best dog-teams that was ever driven tandem in the North, for the pups were now in harness, with the mother

for leader, and, being of one family, they worked in harmony and pulled together.

We were taken to the low divide in the Rockies, and here were furnished with a new guide, a half-breed Eskimo, with blond hair and blue eyes.

Before we started across the mountains, we saw the great outlet of the hot lake, which flowed into a cave; and by signs we were given to understand that this river did not appear again on the other side of the Rockies, but continued underground until it entered the sea.

While the journey across the mountains was by no means pleasant, the hardships were nothing in comparison to those endured on the trip into the country.

After many weeks of weary travel towards the Arctic Ocean, at last we saw unfolded before us miles and miles of frozen sea. As far as our vision would carry there was nothing but great masses of ice. Huge cakes standing on edge, jammed together, were frozen in that position.

After our eyes had become accustomed to the scene, we suddenly caught sight of the mast and a part of the rigging of a small schooner far in the

distance, which seemed to be raised some twenty-five feet or more and lodged between two large icebergs. Our first impression was that it was some exploring expedition in search of the North Pole, that had, like many other such vessels, become ice-bound in these dangerous waters. So we at once set about making preparations to fight our way across the perilous stretch of ice towards the ship, in hopes that we might be rescued by its crew and eventually reach civilization.

Dividing our provisions with the guide, we sent him back to his tribe, then we laid out our course with the compass, and followed it as best we could, for after once leaving the shore our view was obstructed by the towering icebergs. After a hard struggle, during which we often had to pass our outfits from one to the other over great cakes of ice, we finally reached the ship, where we shouted for help, but to our dismay no help came.

After a short rest, I managed with some difficulty to gain the deck, which I found completely covered with ice. From all appearances the boat had been deserted for several months. No sooner had I taken in the situation, when Bill made his appearance over

the side of the ship (his anxiety being equally as great as mine). With the aid of belt axes we cut our way through the ice to the hatchway, and by repeated efforts we at last succeeded in breaking it open. Here we expected to find dead men, starved and frozen, but instead, to our surprise, there were provisions enough to last for years. I rubbed my eyes, for fear I was dreaming, for it was almost too good to be true.

Eventually we got the dogs and outfit on board, then proceeded to make ourselves at home, and in our estimation for the time being there was indeed no place like it. Here we waited for fully three weeks, but no one appeared.

One morning we awoke to find ourselves rolling out of our bunks. Running on deck, we found that the iceberg on which the ship rested was slowly parting, and as a result we were being gradually lowered into the water. After that, we knew that we were moving, and that the entire body of ice for miles around was moving with us, but we did not know in which direction or how fast we were going.

For over a month we lived in terror. The ice around us creaked and moaned, and as the icebergs

jammed against the sides of our little vessel it seemed to fairly groan under the pressure, as if it were alive. My heart went out to it with the thought of rescue, but there was nothing to be done; we could only await developments. In spite of this, we ate regularly, and often tried to joke and laugh, but it was a dry old laugh, for we expected the little schooner at any moment to give way to the pressure. Instead, when the strain became too great, it would rise up and slip away from the iron grip of the ice.

During this time (in fact, the memory was always with me) my thoughts would wander back to the one left behind, and I would try to imagine what she was doing, and if she really was as happy as she had expected to be. As much as I longed for her, yet my heart was filled with deep gratitude to think she was not called upon to endure this added hardship. While we had plenty to eat, and had no trouble in keeping warm, still the continual suspense of watching for the little schooner to be crushed to pieces, together with the constant noise of grating ice, was more nerve-racking than any of the previous difficulties we had encountered.

For weeks we continued floating with the ice, we

knew not where, until finally one day, while standing on deck, I heard Bill shout:

"There she blows!"

I rushed to his side, thinking he had sighted a whale, but not so. Upon looking over the bow of the ship, I saw the ice parting, and the open sea before us, with the ice gradually disappearing as we drifted onward.

Now came the problem of manning a schooner with two men. With the sails frozen solid and the wheel imbedded in a mass of ice, we were left to the mercy of the rolling sea on a drifting derelict.

We took turns about sleeping, for there was no telling when we might drift onto a reef of rocks. One night I curled up on deck in a fur robe to get a little sleep, neither of us being willing to go below. I dreamed of being shipwrecked a long way off shore, and I thought I heard Bill cry out, "All hands on deck, and cut away the lifeboats!"

I awoke and uncovered my head just in time to get the full benefit of a big wave which was washing over the deck, and I found that we were drifting broadside in a rough sea. The rocking of the boat nearly threw me overboard, so I made a grab for

the wheel to save myself. To my astonishment, the wheel was loose, and I looked forward only to see Bill tugging at the mainsail. Every time a wave would wash over the deck it loosened and washed away more of the ice that still coated the deck and sails of our little craft.

Finally Bill succeeded in getting the mainsail half aloft. In the meantime I was holding fast to the wheel. I had had some experience in sailing vessels during a three-months' trip cod-fishing on the Bay of Fundy when a boy, so we soon had our little two-master before the wind traveling at a good speed, but where we were going we did not know.

We had many thrilling experiences during this period, and I often wonder how we survived. However, it seemed that our little craft was destined to float, not to sink, for I must confess we were awkward sailors.

CHAPTER XXX.

SIGHTING LAND.

For five weeks we battled the high seas, but at length, when we had nearly given up hope, we sighted land. Bill was the first to see it, and at once shifted his sail so that we headed straight for it. Actually, I thought he had gone mad until I traced his line of vision to a dark streak faintly visible in the distance.

"Bill," I cried, "this schooner was made for water, not for land. Can't you see that black cloud behind us? If a storm comes up, we will surely be wrecked on some unseen reef!"

Bill looked at me as he had never looked before, for he was almost driven to desperation. His eyes rested on the land a moment, then he turned to me and exclaimed:

"Blast this bloomin' sailor's life anyhow; I don't like it, doncherknow. If I can get my feet on land again the old tub can go to the bottom for all I care!"

My feeling was quite the contrary, for I had grown to like the little vessel, and rather dreaded for the time to come when I should leave it. It was only a short time when the storm swept down upon us, causing us to lose what little nerve we had, and only in vain did we try to get out to sea again, for it was now too late. Every attempt to reverse the craft failed, while the wind swept past us at such a terrific rate that it was impossible for two men to manage the sails and wheel in such a storm.

Lowering the sails, we prepared for the worst, and it came soon enough. As we rapidly neared the shore, I clung fiercely to the wheel, using every ounce of nerve and energy I had to keep the bow towards the land, for my strained eyes told me there was a beach ahead. I knew that at the speed we were traveling, if I could keep the bow head on, I could at least land high enough to beach the schooner.

"Bill, look, is that a beach or an iceberg?"

"Aye, aye, sir; it is a beach," he answered.

"Then hoist the sail and let us hit it hard, for that is our only hope, Bill!"

Bill was not acquainted with fear, so followed my command, at once hoisting the sail, but the wind was so strong that it tore away the rings from the mast, leaving the big white canvas to whip the air. A block was attached to one corner of the sail, and this must have struck Bill on the head, for when I turned to question him again he was stretched out full length on the deck, but I could not afford to desert my post at this critical moment, so clung to the wheel and headed straight for the beach.

With a dull, sickening thud and a terrible groan our craft struck the beach and buried her nose deep in the sand, sticking so fast that the breakers could not loosen her from the imbedment. The force of the vessel striking the beach and coming to a sudden stop tore me from the wheel, and I was flung to the deck, stunned.

How long I lay in this dazed condition I cannot say, but it must have been sometime, for upon regaining my senses I found my clothes wet and frozen. I looked around and saw Bill sitting up, with two of the pups licking his face. The sudden jar of the ship had slid the door of the hatchway back and set the dogs at liberty.

The storm was over, but large breakers were still raising the stern of the ship, and it seemed likely that it might loosen from the sand and turn over on its side, or even drift out to sea again. There was no time to waste, so we threw the dogs overboard to swim ashore, then we made a raft of the lid of the hatchway, and in spite of the breakers succeeded in getting some of the provisions and our outfit ashore.

We built a fire of some driftwood and made ourselves fairly comfortable for the night, but did not attempt to investigate our surroundings, being tired, bruised and chilled to the bone. However, as I began to thaw out by the pleasant fire, I did not feel so happy and contented. I had a restless longing to return to the ship. Finally, I suggested to Bill that we return.

"As soon as the tide comes in," I reminded him, "it may float the ship, and we might be able to get out to sea again. There are plenty of provisions on board; in fact, Bill, it is a good home, the best we've had for many a day. Why, Bill, we could make a tramp schooner out of her and trade for furs and whale oil. That would be better than to be left here on the beach in a desolate, unknown country to starve to death."

For the first time Bill gave way to temper. "Blast your bloomin' ship, and blast and blow you, too! It's ill-luck I've had since I first met you. There seems to be a curse on your bloomin' head to cause you to continue to wander about the earth, lost, starved, frozen and downhearted!"

I said no more, but made up my mind to put an end to his hard luck, if I was indeed the cause of it, so when he had fallen asleep I stole quietly away to slip on board the ship alone. I succeeded, but to my astonishment the dogs followed me, howling to be taken on board. Their loud cries awoke Bill, who, remembering his unkind words, understood that I meant to leave him. He rushed after me, and his apologies were many and heartfelt, and finally he persuaded me to go ashore again until morning, at least.

Quieting down at last, we fell into the deep sleep of the exhausted, and it was well into the next day before we awoke. My first thought being of the ship, I turned my eyes in that direction, but, as I feared, it had drifted out to sea. A broad smile of satisfaction swept over Bill's grim features when he

saw what had happened, but in my heart there was a feeling of sadness when I waved goodby to the brave little ship that had carried us through the storm, and from which we had procured food and shelter for so many weeks.

After a hearty breakfast, we bundled our provisions together and started to follow the beach, hoping to find some Eskimos who could tell us where we were. After "mushing" two days, the dogs began to sniff the air and bark, and we felt sure we were nearing a settlement, but upon going a little farther we came upon a number of men prospecting on a small stream, which they had named "Candle Creek." From them we learned that we were in Alaska. They invited us to stop and prospect with them, but when we found that Nome was not far from there, we told them we had stood all of the hardships we could endure, and intended to make for civilization. We traded some of our supplies, which they were glad to get, for what we were most in need of, and after another hard tramp we arrived safely at Nome.

We stayed there a few weeks, when we heard the news of the strike of gold discovered by Blank-

enship on Candle Creek, the place we had just left.

"Professor, it is a blasted sight better to be in Alaska broke, than in the United States with a hundred dollars in your pocket," Bill remarked, "so me for Alaska till I make a stake."

"As you will, Bill," I answered, "it makes but little difference to me where I remain. My life is one disappointment after another."

Finally we decided to go back to Candle Creek, for I was personally acquainted with Blankenship, the discoverer, and had on several occasions befriended him the winter that I stayed in the Atlin country, and I was sure that if I should meet him he would "put me off on the right foot." We still had about one hundred dollars in nuggets with us, brought from the cave in the iron mountain; so we bought supplies enough to take us to the new discovery, and when we paid for them with these nuggets the merchant looked at us in wonder, and said:

"Boys, you did not get that gold around these diggin's, did you?"

When we assured him that we had not, he made several attempts to learn what part of the country we hailed from, but we evaded the subject.

The sight of this strange gold started a stampede, and the next morning crowds of miners surrounded us, offering us one-half interest in all they could get if we would tell them where these nuggets came from. We simply told them that it was impossible to get any more where we had gotten this.

So Bill and I went to Candle Creek, and leased a claim that made us both immensely wealthy. Although each day our claim produced great quantities of gold, it had no charms for me. I was gradually failing, and I seemed in reality to be as old as I looked.

At last Bill suggested that we sell our lease, and go to Southern California for my health, which we did. I have found, however, that climate was not what I was looking for, for as I relate these last words, with Bill's big, brawny hand across my burning forehead, I know my end has come.

"Bill, my friend, in yon clothes-bag you will find a detailed account of our trip. I kept it as a diary. Add to it what I have forgotten, but be careful in all you say—don't give the true route to that country, for the penalty would be the death of the girl.

Come, Bill, I will place the medal and chain of gold—given me by Chief Eric—around your neck, in acknowledgment of a true friend. I feel that my mission is achieved and I am leaving little Minnie happy, with the dream of her life fulfilled."

"To you, Bill, these are my last words:—The measure of a man's power is the love in the heart of him—a love that seeks not its own, but sacrifices itself to the one he loves. This is true love, after all."

"Bill, whip up the dogs! The ice is giving down, and it is a long way to shore. Mush! Mush on, there! Look! look Bill! There is the Jew crawling out of the crevice! Ike, I tried to save you—he fell back on his pillow, and the Professor crossed the Great Gold Divide.

* * * * *

I've done my bloomin' best with his diary, and have placed my pal to rest in a little green spot in the sunny state of California.

On a marble slab at his head, is this same inscription:

"We know not whence we came or where we go,
Believe as we will, we do not know."

END.





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